Date A Live Volume 3

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These are novel illustrations that were included in **Volume 3 - Killer Kurumi**

Killer KURUMI

SpiritNo.3
AstralDress-NightmareType Weapon-ClockType[Zafkiel]

橘公司
The author
Koushi Tachibana

03

デート・ア・ライブ
DATE A LIVE

狂三キラー

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デート・ア・ライブ3

狂三キラー

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「わたくし、精霊ですのよ」

転校生の少女、狂三（くるみ）の衝撃的な自己紹介。校内を案内することになった士道に、少女は微笑を浮かべささやく。

「士道さんにお願いがありますの。……聞いてくださいまして？」

世界を殺す災厄を体現（たいげん）するかのように己の意思と、明確な殺意で、愉悦（ゆえつ）を感じながら、人を殺す最悪の精霊。

「精霊が現れやがったんです。ならぶっ殺す以外にすることはねーです」そして、その精霊を殺す少女、真那（まな）。人を殺す少女と精霊を殺す少女。悪夢（あくむ）を断ち切るため、デートして、デレさせろ!?

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デート・ア・ライブ3　狂三キラー

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SpiritNo.3
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DATE デート・ア・ライブ A LIVE

03

狂三キラー

橘公司
The author
Koushi Tachibana

レーベル史上、最速――
アニメ化
企画進行中!!

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23th Anniversary
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王道宣言!!フェア

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DATE A LIVE Killer KURUMI

デート・ア・ライブ 3 狂三キラー

「いい……ですわよ、士道さんなら」

転校生――時崎狂三（ときさきくるみ）

「実の妹の方がつえーに決まっていやがります！」

士道の実妹？——崇宮真那（たかみやまな）

「…………」

高校生——五河士道（いつかしどう）

「今の妹は私なの！」

士道の義妹——五河琴里（いつかことり）

「シドー！」
精霊――十香

「問題ない。私も今来たところ」
士道のクラスメイト――鳶一折紙

「とても嬉しいですわ。――それで、まずはどちらに行かれますの？」

「倒れないのなら倒れるまで、
死なないのなら死ぬまで、
貴様を殺し続けるのが、
私の使命であり存在理由です」

「きひ、ひひ、ひひひひひひひッ、まアアアアだわかりませんのぉ？
あなたにわたくしを殺しきることは絶ェエエエッ対にできませんわ」

第３の精霊――狂三

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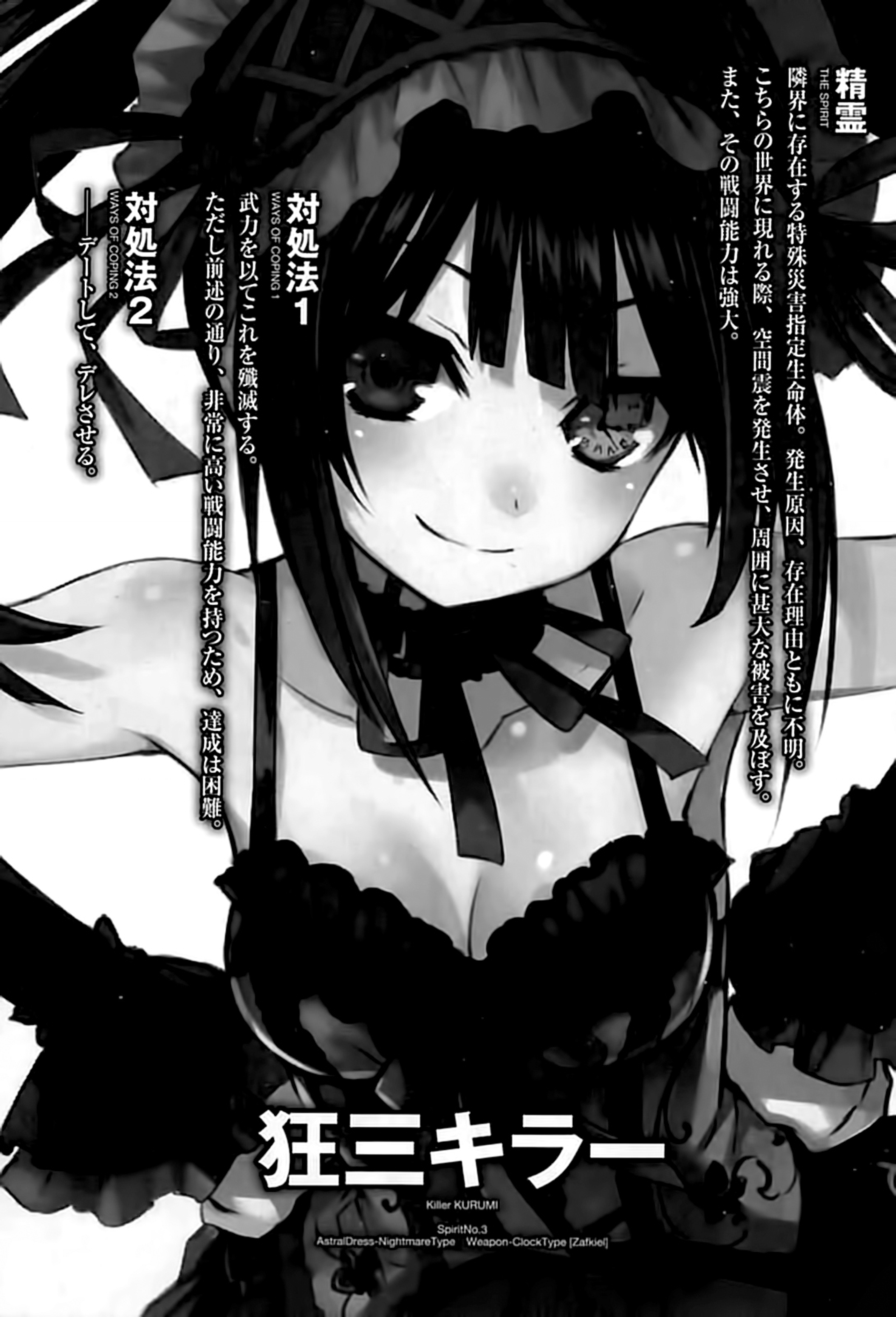
「あ、明日……デートに行かない……か？」



精霊
THE SPIRIT

隣界に存在する特殊災害指定生命体。発生原因、存在理由ともに不明。
こちらの世界に現れる際、空間震を発生させ、周囲に甚大な被害を及ぼす。
また、その戦闘能力は強大。

対処法1
WAYS OF COPING 1

武力を以てこれを殲滅する。
ただし前述の通り、非常に高い戦闘能力を持つため、達成は困難。

対処法2
WAYS OF COPING 2

――デートして、デレさせる。

狂三キラー

Killer KURUMI

SpiritNo.3
AstralDress-NightmareType　Weapon-ClockType [Zafkiel]

Prologue: The Black Visitor

"I'm a Spirit."

Monday, June 5th.

After hearing this statement from the transfer student standing in front of the blackboard, Raizen High School class 2-4 sank into silence.

But the reactions that everyone showed were not the same.

Most of the students could not understand the meaning to her words, and had expressions along the lines of "What's the matter with this person? A girl that loves to daydream? Or is there something wrong with her?" on their dumbstruck faces.

Furthermore, there were a lot of boys who were mesmerized by her stunning beauty, and as a result, were not able to hear what she just said.

—However, Itsuka Shidou's reaction was totally different from his classmates'.

"...Wha-!"

With deep wrinkles appearing between his brows and sweat dripping from his face, Itsuka Shidou observed the carefree transfer student standing beside the table.

It was a girl who tied her black hair into two ponytails. Her skin was as white and smooth as silk. That neck of hers exposed from her collar was so slender it was as though it would break if the slightest bit of strength was applied.

The most significant aspect was her bangs. Although the girl had an astonishing beauty...... her bangs were abnormally long, almost covering the left side of her face.

However, Shidou could not help but feel lucky because of that.

Her right eye was not covered by the bangs—the moment they made eye contact, Shidou was mesmerized akin to that of being tempted by a devil. Thus, if he was looked at with both of her eyes, Shidou would probably be the same as the rest of the boys mentioned earlier.

Shidou swallowed, and took a glance at the blackboard.

At this point, the girl took the white chalk at the blackboard and wrote her name.

"Tokisaki......Kurumi."

Shidou said this name in a low voice that no one could hear.

Spirit.

Just now—Kurumi had indeed said this term.

Right now in the classroom, only three people truly understood the meaning in those words.

"............"

Shidou glanced at the seats on his left and his right.

The girl seated to his right—Yatogami Tohka showed a dumbstruck, surprised expression that was obvious at a glance.

In contrast, Tobiichi Origami, who was seated at Shidou's left, though her face did not show any change, cast a cold, murderous glance at Kurumi..

Afterwards—after Shidou finished observing the reactions of those two, the moment he looked back to the front......

"......!"

Shidou held his breath, while his shoulders trembled for an instant.

However, that was perfectly normal. Because Tokisaki Kurumi was using her right eye, which had long eyelashes, to stare at Shidou.

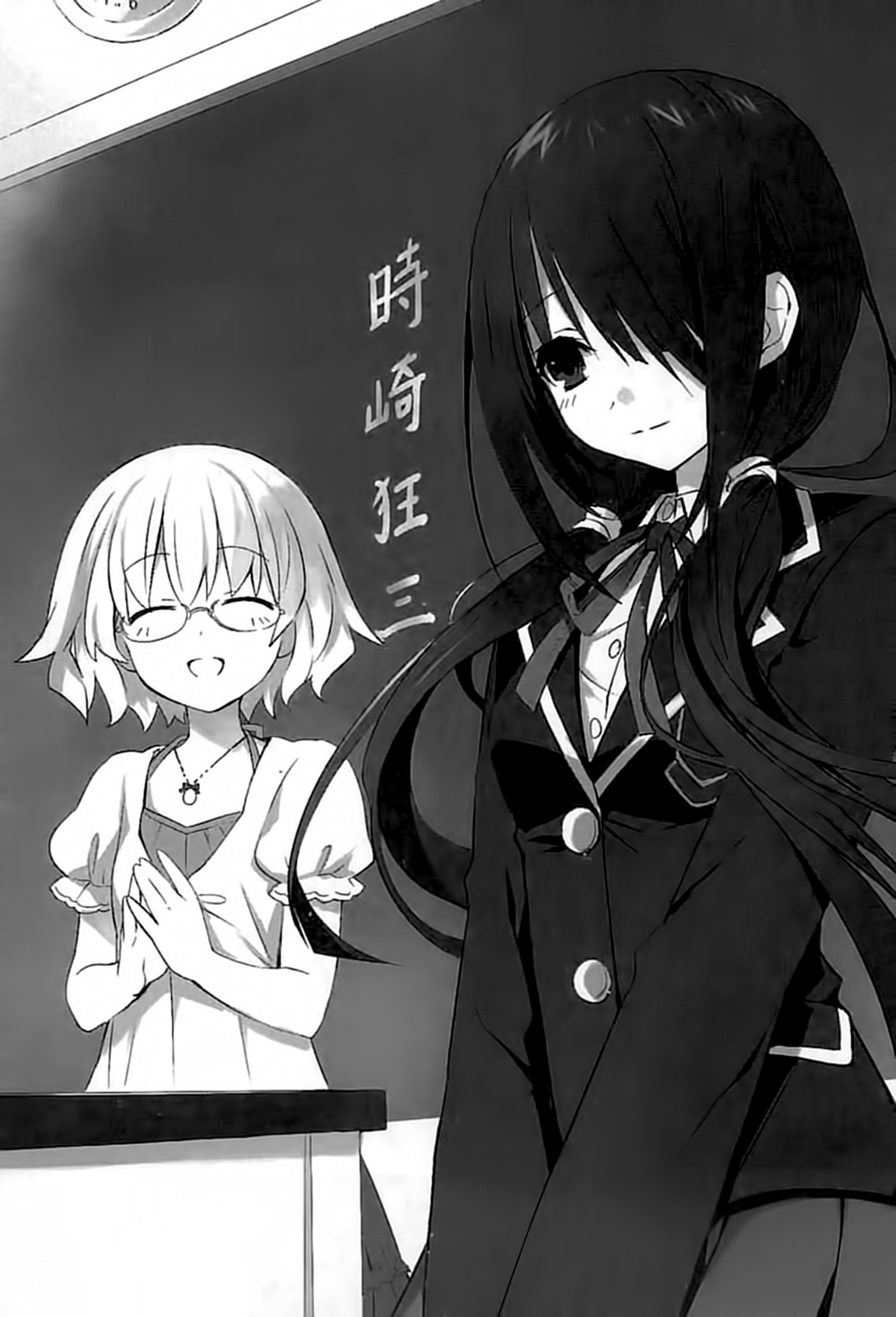
"......Wha—"

Shidou could not move his body. At this point, Kurumi's eyes and mouth changed to form a smile.

"I hope I will get along with everyone in the future."

After finishing, she slightly bowed.

While no one sensed Shidou's fear, the classroom gave a resounding applause.


時崎狂三

Chapter 1: Second Transfer Student

Licking her lips, she tasted sweat.

The Personal Territory that surrounds her body is able to control gravity, humidity, temperature as well as anything imaginable.

Therefore, if one wants to know the reason for perspiration, one must consider external factors. For example, excessive exercise, serious illnesses—

Or, overwhelming panic.

"............"

Tobiichi Origami swallowed her saliva, as though trying to regulate her breathing, tightly held the handle of the high efficiency laser blade <No Pain> in her hand.

Currently wrapping Origami's slender body, is not the school uniform that she is used to wearing, but a suit that has a splicing device and a Realizer unit made for combat equipped.

Modern magicians wear these in order to perform magic, mechanized armor.

Wearing this, the magicians that expands their Personal Territory, could very well be called superhumans.

However—Right now. Origami who is currently a superhuman, has been totally driven into a corner.

"—Uwaaaaaaaa!?"

"......Tch."

In response to the cry that came from the communicator, Origami softly let out a sigh.

A familiar sound. That was the anti-Spirit team that Origami belonged to, an AST member's voice.

That makes—nine people already. All members besides Origami have already been defeated.

"......Ku"

While Origami used surrounding obstacles to hide her figure, she gave an order inside her head.

At once, the light within Origami's Personal Territory bent, the screen showing the scene that Origami's normal vision could not.

Near Tenguu Base where the JGSDF was located, the special training grounds.

It was where Origami and the AST members used when they had the CR-Unit equipped, special areas that have been applied with magic.

And in the center of the desolate forest of rubble, a girl whose hair was tied in a bunch calmly stood.

—Takamiya Mana.

As Origami silently recalled the girl's name, she observed Mana's body posture once more.

Her age is about 14 to 15 years old. Under the left eye of that adorable face is a tear mole, with remnants of innocence still remaining.

However, encasing that petite figure is an unadorable mechanized armor that did not match that girl at all——CR-Unit.

It was slightly different from the models that Origami and the AST members normally use, the shoulders are outfitted with military equipment resembling shields. It is said to be the newer prototype from the AST team's equipment

"—Hey, the last person. Wherever you are hiding, please hurry up and come out now."

Mana simply stated, while totally ignoring the AST members that lay at her feet.

Although it cannot be seen from this angle, but the neutralized eight members of the AST should have collapsed in the shadows of the surrounding obstacles.

It was an absolute one sided power. It was just like having a Spirit as an opponent.

—It was the end of last month when she was posted to this Tenguu base.

It was said, that she was the JGSDF's trump card.

It was said, her ability to control the Realizer unit is one of the top in the world.

It was said—that she k.i.l.l.e.d a Spirit by herself.

Just based on those rumors, she would indeed be an abnormal monster.

However, on her first meeting she said sentences on the lines of "Is there anyone who can beat me here? Even one is okay." Of course, for the AST who prided themselves as elites, there is no way they would take it lying down.

Thus, as an excuse to find out Mana's combat ability, a special mock battle of one versus ten was held.

Although truthfully speaking, Origami had no interest in this..... .

"......"

Without saying anything, Origami remembered the conversation that she had with Mana the day before.

The day that Mana had been posted to Tenguu base, Origami and the AST members were looking at the battle images from the other day.

Mana looked at the image showed on the screen—Itsuka Shidou , and said.

"—Nii-sama."

Origami has never heard of Shidou having such a sister before. After Origami raised this issue to her, Mana spoke with a shocked expression.

(!! Master Sergeant Tobiichi knows Nii-sama!? Umu......Nn, okay, I can tell you the details.—But, this mock battle, you must participate, this is the only condition.)

After that conversation, there were no other choices left.

In the end, Origami had to participate in the exercise—

The result was the same as what she currently sees now.

Nine members have already been neutralized; Origami has also lost all other equipment aside from her laser blade for close combat .

On the contrary, Mana was still untouched.

"......Hey, at this rate time is going to run out you know?"

Mana let out a sigh, letting out such a statement that seems to lack keigo.

It was not a solution to keep hiding like this. Origami allowed her body to float, appearing in front of Mana.

"—Oh. Finally determined aren't you?"

"......"

Origami gave a mental order in her head, activating the thrusters on her back.

Origami's inventory is only left with one <No Pain>. There is no other available option aside from close combat.

Leaning her body forward, she flew into the sky at an intense speed.

"How straightforward. I don't dislike that you now."

As the corner of Mana's mouth rose, the shields on her shoulder started to change, equipping itself onto her two arms.

"<Murakumo>—Twin Blade Mode."

The next instant, huge blades of light emerged from the tip of the shields.

However, Origami did not stop moving.

Bringing <No Pain> above her head, she accelerated even more.

But Origami knows that she will lose if she rushed in like this.

"—Now's the time."

So, the instant that Mana's and their Personal Territories touched, she rapidly shrank the size of her Personal Territory.

The Territory that is usually expanded to a radius of three and a half meters has been reduced to that of one-tenth.

Instantly, the parts of the thrusters that are outside of the Personal Territory regained their original weight.

At the same time Origami disconnected the thrusters from the wiring suit, grabbed the deactivated <No Pain> tightly and curled up, moving under Mana's elbow.

"Wha......?"

Because of the sudden action, Mana widened her eyes.

The thrusters that lost its controller followed the law of inertia, bearing down towards Mana like a gigantic bullet.

"Tch! Too naive...!"

However Mana swiftly regained composure, using the laser blade to cut the thrusters in half.

Sparks scattered everywhere, the two halves of the thrusters fell to the ground with smoke billowing out.

But- this was the opportunity that Origami was waiting for.

"—Tch!"

The blade of <No Pain> reappeared once more, falling towards Mana's back.

Aiming for the opening as Mana focused on intercepting the thrusters, an unblockable hit.

As Origami had targeted, the blade of <No Pain> left a light scratch on Mana's CR-Unit.

—However.

"Wha......"

Origami was left speechless.

The instant the sharp edge of the laser blade made contact with Mana's equipment; her whole body had the feeling as though one was being constantly stroked by a palm—Origami's movements stopped.

"—Fuu, that was dangerous"

Mana turned her head towards Origami to make eye contact.

Origami felt difficulty breathing. It's unmistakable. Mana had stopped Origami's movements, with just her Personal Territory alone.

......Truly, it wasn't a result that had not been predicted.

It had been considered that with just Mana's reaction time, maybe she could have already dealt with Origami immediately after she had intercepted the thrusters. Whatever the reason, she was right next to Mana, right inside her Personal territory.

But disregarding the above, if it was Origami's Personal Territory that has been shrunk to thirty centimeters, such an action is not impossible, at least that was calculated to be.

But......it was not calculated to be that easy.

"Too bad, it's checkmate."

Mana slowly turned her body, the blade of light touching Origami's shoulder.

At the same time, the alarm above their heads sounded. Afterwards, voices came from the battle suits.

"Battle practice has ended. The winner is Second Lieutenant Takamiya Mana"

After the battle practice.

Origami who returned to the hangar inside the base, was rearranging her thoughts while staring at the ground.

As though wanting to recall that feeling she felt several minutes ago, tightly gripping her right hand.

"…………"

Due to deactivation of the Personal Territory, the body feels extremely heavy. Just the act of raising the arm and clenching the fist brings about the abnormal feeling that one is swimming in an extremely viscous mud.

But it was also due to this phenomenon that hinted at her own uselessness, Origami unconsciously added strength to that tightly held fist.

"Takamiya——Mana"

As though she were showing off, that ability to make use of her Personal Territory and special suit to that extent. Truly, she was without doubt a legendary genius.

This should be something to celebrate. Mana is a human, an AST member. Meaning, she has the same goal to take down Spirits like Origami. If there are more magicians that are just like her, the success rate for combat should greatly increase.

But, even though this fact had been understood, an unexplainable sense of frustration grew stronger and stronger within Origami's heart.

"……She's strong"

Origami stared at her clenched fist and said. At the same time, a voice came from overhead.

"—You're amazing too, Master Sergeant Tobiichi."

Hastily raising her head, not knowing when she came close, Mana who was wearing the combat wiring suit is standing there with sports drinks in both hands.

"Don't mention it."

After saying it, she offered the sports drink in her left hand.

"............"

Even though she had just deactivated her personal territory, Mana's movements did not seem to be sluggish at all.

Origami looked at Mana in confusion, at the same time raised her heavy arm and took the bottle.

Mana gave a satisfactory nod, continuing her conversation after taking a mouthful of the drink.

"To tell you the truth, that was really scary. Even though it was just a few millimeters of the tip of the blade, but I haven't had anyone that can touch me in combat for a long time. "

No sense of sarcasm added, just a pure assessment of Origami's ability.

"What must I do—to be as strong as you?"

Origami asked Mana, who looked as though she was troubled with her brows knitting together, "I've heard you have killed a Spirit before. I'd like to hear the details."

Regarding Origami's words, Mana lightly shrugged her shoulders.

"Killed.......a Spirit, you say? Well, what you've said isn't wrong —"

Faced with that uncertain reply, Origami slightly slanted her head.

"What's the matter?"

"Mm...... the thing is, [that], is a little different from the rest of the Spirits—even so do you still want to listen?"

"Whatever it is, no matter how little is the information. Please tell me."

"Hm, it doesn't matter......Although this can't be widely said in public, but I think in the near future you will have the chance to see it for yourself.—I was posted here for this reason after all."

Towards that declaration that did not reveal much, Origami tilted her head.

"......? I've heard that you had been posted here to boost our combat ability."

"What you said isn't totally wrong. But to be accurate, I was posted here to confirm the signs of [a certain Spirit]."

"A certain Spirit?"

"Yes. All this time, I have been chasing after the most brutal Spirit. Its codename is—"

As Mana was about to continue.

Bang! Bang!

The heads of the two had been hit.

"......Sss"

"It hurts."

Origami and Mana held their heads and turned their heads to the right at the same time.

Standing there was, the AST's team leader wearing the JGSDF's military uniform• Kusakabe Ryoko, in her hand was some rolled up book.

"You. Two......"

The blood vessels on her forehead bulged, and at the same time pointed to the scrap iron retrieved from the training grounds with a *Shwa!*—

It was the thrusters that had been cleanly split into two.

"Didn't I say it was a mock battle!? Why did you have to destroy such expensive equipment!?"

The two of them, while staring at Ryoko's extended finger, replied.

"I used half-assed methods to try and ambush Second Lieutenant Takamiya but failed."

"Although we say it is a mock battle, but if we don't fight for real—, then won't we obtain inaccurate data? That's what I deduced."

As such, the heads of the two were hit once more.

"What an insight. Tell me that after properly researching the cost of the parts to build those realizer units! Our budget isn't unlimited you know!"

"Understood."

"Got it."

"Really now......"

After leaving behind a "Be more careful next time", Ryoko left shrugging her shoulders.

Once the figure of her back disappeared, Mana unhappily pouted her lips.

"I say, Captain-dono really is a headache. It is because of that that makes her as annoying like those Spirits."

"I agree."

Origami nodded, Mana happily grinned.

"I feel that we can get along with each other very well, Master Sergeant Tobiichi. We are people who treat Spirits and the like as enemies, if we were to be so materialistic, we won't be able to win even if we could."

After saying that, she exaggeratedly shrugged her shoulders.

Origami wordlessly reassessed Mana's face once more.

As expected......Not just the looks, or the atmosphere, they were both very similar to Shidou's.

But, Shidou should only have one sister.

Even if no words were exchanged, but she did see her a few times before. Itsuka Kotori. Needless to say, she was a different individual from Mana.

However—according to Origami's data, Shidou was adopted. The possibility that Mana was Shidou's real sister cannot be totally denied.

"Second Lieutenant Takamiya."

Origami naturally asked.

"As promised. Tell me about the relationship between you and Shidou."

"Shidou......? Who's that?"

Mana tilted her head. ...... That's unusual. Origami continued while stunned.

"A few days before while we were watching the battle with the [Hermit]—that's the name of the youth inside the video. You, who called that person nii-sama. You promised to tell me if I participated in the practice."

"......Sss, Nii—sama......?"

Mana lightly frowned.

"Is something wrong?"

"No, it's just a light headache......"

Saying that, she pressed the side of her head with her hand.

Origami felt that at this moment Mana looked familiar.—Just last month, like Shidou inside the video.

"......Sss, Sorry about that. It's all right now. Ah, that issue about Nii-sama."

Mana shook her head lightly as though trying to shake off the pain, retrieved a very small pendant from the chest area of her battle uniform

And, opened it. Inside was a photograph of a small boy and girl .

"—Shidou."

Origami softly spoke. That was undoubtedly, Itsuka Shidou when he was young. And at his side, was a girl with a tear mole as her feature—that was Mana no matter how you looked at it.

"This is?"

"A photo of the past.—My only clue, between me and Nii-sama. "

"Please tell me the details."

Although Origami stated as such, Mana scratched her head as though she was troubled.

"Even so I must apologize......But I don't remember anything at all."

"......? How come?"

"No......To tell you the truth, I don't have memories of the past?"

"Amnesia?"

"It can be simply understood like that.—But, once I saw that image, I recalled something. I have called that person Nii-sama before in the past."

"Then why, must you still give me that condition?"

Origami said in surprise, Mana apologetically bowed her head

"No—......I wanted to see Master Sergeant Tobiichi's ability. In this platoon you must be considered the strongest. To be honest, you've exceeded my expectations."

"............"

Origami wordlessly looked at Mana's face. Even though it was a one sided win she said that her expectations were exceeded, her heart felt a little complicated.

Mana looked up at Origami and continued.

"That......Master Sergeant Tobiichi. I'm sorry, but I have another request to ask of you."

"What is it?"

"Even though it may be selfish, that......Information on Nii-sama, you do have it right? As long as it is within your limits, can you please tell me?"

"..........."

Not knowing since when the situation seems to have reversed.... ..Origami thought for a while, slightly nodded her head and agreed.

"—Name, Itsuka Shidou. Age—sixteen years old."

"Right."

"His family consists of his father, mother and sister. Currently his parents have left the country for overseas work. He is adept at household chores."

"Umu......"

"Blood type is AO RH+. Height is 170.0cm. Weight is 58.5 kilos. Seated height is 90.2 cm, upper arm 30.2 cm, forearm 30.2 cm. Bust 82.2 cm, waist 70.3 cm, hip 87.6cm."

"......Okay?"

"Eyesight for the right eye is 0.6, left eye 0.8, grip strength for right hand 43.5 kilo, left hand 41.2 kilo. Blood pressure 128/75. Blood sugar level 88mg/dl. Urea level 4.2mg/dl"

"S, Stop stop! I don't want to know those things."

"Is that so?"

Origami nodded slightly in response to Mana's frantic shouts.

"That saying, haa, those really were detailed information. Was that a joke?"

"Not a joke. Those were correct measurements."

"..................."

Origami replied with a straight face, Mana knitted her brows with perspiration forming on her face.

"......Sorry, what exactly is the relationship, between Master Sergeant Tobiichi and Nii-sama?"

Regarding Mana's question, Origami replied with no hesitation, confusion or stutter.

"Lovers."

"Hold it. What are you doing Shidou?"

"Hehh?"

In the living room at home, Itsuka Shidou who was asked this question all of a sudden incoherently responded.

Turning his head, with black ribbons tying her hair into two bunches, a uniform wearing girl stood with hands on her hips.

Shidou's sister• Itsuka Kotori— Commander Mode.

Round, cute eyes seemed to slant unhappily, with the Chupa Chups lollipop stick in her mouth, pointing straight up as though it were the tail of an animal intimidating its enemies.

"What am I doing......Of course I'm preparing to go to school."

Shidou gave his appearance a glance once over. Wearing a high school uniform (summer uniform), a bag in his right hand, a bento in his left, no matter how you look at it, it is of a person that was about to go to school.

But Kotori shrugged her shoulders and shook her head, as though it were an American sitcom.

"Okay, let me rephrase myself. Shidou, what's that in your left hand?"

"Just a bento."

"For yourself?"

"No......It's for Tohka."

That's right. Shidou's own bento has already been kept inside his bag. The bento in his left hand was for the girl living in the condominium nearby—Tohka.

"Then how do you wish to give it to Tohka?"

"I'm planning to put in inside her mailbox......"

As I can't hand it to her personally at school, so by using the mailboxes spare key, it is placed inside every morning.

Saying this, Shidou gave a short "Ah!"

"Aaa, you're worried about that. It’s that season where the weather gets really warm; you're concerned about hygiene aren't you? Relax; I've put cold packs as well as anti-bacterial sheets. Well it'd be perfect if I'd put dried plums inside, but Tohka seems to hate dried plums—Ah!?"

Halfway through his sentence, his shin was kicked by Kotori. Shidou fell towards the front while curling his body. The bag fell to the floor, but at least he had saved Tohka's bento.

"Wha, What are you......!"

"Because I wanted you to die once. Why are you still putting it in her mailbox?"

"Th, That's because if I don't I can't give it to her. After all we go to school at different times—"

"That's the reason."

Kotori took out the lollipop in her mouth and faced Shidou.

"It has been two weeks since Tohka moved next door. Shidou—have you and Tohka ever went to school together before? "

"Eh? That is......"

Moving his line of sight to the front, he counted the number of times in his head.

"......Now that you've mentioned it, no. Not even once."

Shidou said while using his now bag-free right hand to scratch his cheek.

Shidou and Tohka had once been living together for a short period, but at that time, it seemed as though weird rumors were starting between classmates, in the end they had to go to school at different times.

That being said, they are currently neighbors and not living together, they have no need to be so paranoid anymore. The truth is that the two of them usually go home together.

But not knowing if it has become a habit, but even till now Shidou still goes to school slightly earlier.

Well, it is also because Tohka was more of a late riser than Shidou.

Kotori used her hand to support her forehead with an expression of disbelief.

"After much difficulty in getting her to stay next door, being classmates, there is no reason to waste the event of going to school right?—After all if other Spirits appear again in the future, they won't pay any attention towards Tohka, so you must take this opportunity to be with her."

"Mu, Muuuu......"

Shidou squeezed out a sound from his throat as though he was groaning.

—This world is sometimes prone to sudden disasters known as spacequakes.

Just as it is coined, [Spatial Earthquakes], using the epicenter as the core of the spatial area in a designated perimeter, causes a horrifying explosion that causes everything inside to disappear.

Even though spacequake predicting methods and ways to rapidly rebuild structures have been developed in this modern age , it is still a serious natural disaster.

Although it is not usually publicly revealed—but the real reason for these spacequakes, is due to the existences of [Spirits].

Spirits that are usually non-existent in this world, whenever they materialize, the spatial boundaries would cause a violent quake. This has been believed to be the cause for the spacequakes.

Of course, humans who know of this thought of multiple counter-plans to defend against such a threat.

Among those plans can be divided into two groups.

One, using military might to destroy the Spirits.

While the other plan is—

"You got that Shidou? The next time a Spirit appears, you must make her fall in love with you."

"I, I got it."

Looking as though he gave up, Shidou replied with a sigh.

That's right, that is the other method.

To make contact with the Spirit, engage in conversation with them, after her emotions reach a peak—kiss.

Although not knowing why, Shidou has the power to seal the power of the Spirits.

And targeting that power, is the organization that Kotori belongs to, <Ratatoskr>.

"Very well. So, go to school with Tohka for today. Okay?"

"Mn. Understood."

There is no other meaning behind it. Shidou picked up his bag and headed towards the door.

"Slow down Shidou. You forgot something."

Midway, Kotori's voice sounded, Shidou looked at his hands.

"Ah? Is there anything else?"

"This one, this."

Kotori extended her hand, showing the equipment in her palm,

She then extending her right index finger and pointed towards her ear.

As though she wanted Shidou to put on the equipment immediately.

"......That? Why must I......?"

"Because the time is just right, so let's train you while you're at it . Alright, now wear it already."

As such, Kotori half forced Shidou to put it on his right ear while smiling.

"Tra, Training......What exactly is this for anyway."

"Is that so—Today's topic is, to chase away Tohka's jealousy."

"Ha.....haa? Let jealousy......disappear? What's that all about?"

"Nn. Do you still remember last month's incident when Yoshino appeared?"

"......A,aa."

Shidou softly muttered.

Yoshino is a small female Spirit that appeared after Tohka...... But, when she appeared, Tohka started to throw tantrums for no apparent reason.

"That's the key point, if Shidou becomes intimate with other girls, Tohka will become unhappy."

"Eh......? Wha, What?"

At the same time Shidou started to protest, Kotori looked like she chanced upon an idiot, let out a sigh.

"A.n.y.w.a.y, If Shidou's relationship with other girls is good, Tohka's mental state will slowly become unstable—In the end, that will cause a backflow of the Spirit's power. If that is going to happen every time a new Spirit appears, it’s going to be troublesome."—"Therefore,

(Kotori pointed her finger towards Shidou.)

today when you go to school, staff members from <Ratatoskr> are going to do various stuff to fan Tohka's flames of jealousy. Shidou, your job is to deal with it when it happens."

"Deal with it, but......That, what exactly should I do......?"

"It's going to be fine, come on now."

Although Shidou had an expression of total confusion, Kotori seemed to not care at all, pushing Shidou by his back through the door.

"It's almost time for Tohka to leave her house. For further details, just listen to the instructions through the transmitter."

"No, wa, wait a second......"

Despite Shidou not totally understanding his situation, it was no use trying to oppose Kotori in this mode; this fact has been deeply understood over the past two months. Having no other option, he started to wear his shoes.

At this point, Kotori's voice sounded from behind Shidou once more.

"Aaa, right, right, there's one more thing. We have a guest today as well. Well, it’s fine if it’s just a simple greeting, try talking to her for a while."

"A guest?"

Regarding Shidou's question, Kotori did not respond, but went upstairs. Since she said she would give instructions through the microphone, most likely she was going to <Fraxinus> via the balcony on the second floor.

Not understanding what was going on. But, it was not a solution to continue like this. Shidou opened the door and stepped outside.

All of a sudden, the sunlight dazzled Shidou's corneas.

"Nn......"

Today was 5th June. By now it should already be the rainy season, but for some reason the skies were clear recently.—As if the heavens have already used up the rain on last month.

Different from the previous years, there was no cloud cover, strong rays of sunlight directly shone onto the earth, causing the temperature to rise.

Unable to bear with the summer heat, Shidou changed into his summer uniform.

At that moment.

"Aare......?"

Looking at the silhouette standing under the sunlight outside the Itsuka residence, Shidou can't help widening his eyes.

Standing right there is, a girl that looks the same as Kotori's age.

Wearing a cool one piece dress, a white summer hat as though wanting to hide her eyes, under the sunhat revealed blue green hair just like the ocean, and those sapphire eyes are constantly glancing towards Shidou's direction.

Also—what was even more striking was that in her left hand, for some reason, had a funny looking rabbit on it.

"Yoshino!?"

There's no way one would forget the name of a girl with such personality. Shidou walked up to Yoshino's side.

"Yahooo—, Shidou-kun. It's been a while hasn't it—"

At this moment, the rabbit puppet in Yoshino's left hand, started to talk by opening and closing its mouth.

"Oh, oh, It's been a while—That, um, Yoshinon."

While slightly nodding his head, he replied to the puppet. This puppet was called [Yoshinon]. Yoshino's friend.

This puppet was originally just an ordinary puppet, its voice undoubtedly originating from ventriloquism—but when Yoshino puts it on, it is said that the second personality known as [Yoshinon] would emerge from within her.

The key thing was, the puppet's movements and speech, was totally not of Yoshino's will.

"Is anything the matter? Has today's checks been completed?"

"Nn—, physical examinations has been perfectly finished—, but there is still a need for practice—"

[Yoshinon] said while waving its short limbs.

"Practice?"

At the same time Shidou said that, [Yoshinon] suddenly raised the edge of Yoshino's sunhat.

"......Sss"

Yoshino seemed to be very afraid, her shoulders jolted for a second.

But after swallowing hard, she opened her shaking lips and said .

"Good, good morning, Shidou-san......!"

Yoshino used a voice that was more audible than last month to greet him.

"Woah!?"

Shidou widened his eyes, and took a step backwards.

Yoshino who was shy in nature and fearful of humans, fully relies on [Yoshinon] to deal with outside issues, who doesn't speak much at all. This was the first time that Shidou heard Yoshino speak at this volume.

At this point, some buzzing could be heard from his right ear.—It's Kotori. She must have reached <Fraxinus> already.

"What? She can already talk to me and Reine you know?"

"Really? Isn't that amazing Yoshino?"

After Shidou said that, Yoshino seemingly embarrassed pulled down the edge of her hat, but the edges of her mouth seem to show signs of a smile.

Then, accompanied by the sound of the Chupa Chups being moved around in the mouth, Kotori continued to speak.

"Even though it is still early, but I wish to let Yoshino live outside of the warship.—Having Yoshino as a conversation partner, the mental stress accumulating in Tohka should be lesser, this shouldn't be a problem......Since in <Ratatoskr>, it’s better to let Spirits have a better understanding of society and live happy lives."

"Umu. Isn't that great?"

"Nn. So that's why today we let her introduce herself."

"Is that so?"

"Yoshino's home outside of the warship, is the first choice that place?"

Following Kotori's voice, Shidou looked up to face the high class condominium next to the Itsuka residence.

The building where Tohka is currently staying, it is said that < Ratatoskr> specially designed it for Spirits to live in. Even if something unexpected happens, it seems that it won't be easily destroyed.

"So......I see."

"But—whether a proper conversation can be held is still questionable."

"Aah......"

That's right. Even though the rooms are different, but no matter how you look at it they can be considered neighbors.

No, even before that Tohka and Yoshino were originally Spirits. But it was not understood why till now Yoshino seemed to still have a bad impression of Tohka, it would be best if they can properly speak to one another.

Then, the condominium's automatic door silently opened.

A girl walked from inside still yawning.

She had hair as black as night and seemed to be exceptionally conspicuous under the glaring sunlight, a beautiful appearance and crystal eyes that gave off a steady feel.

It was Shidou's classmate, Yatogami Tohka.

"......"

Looking at her appearance, Shidou held his breath.

Tohka at present was not wearing the western jacket she had been wearing the past week, but the short sleeved summer uniform with a ribbon.

Well, Shidou was also wearing his summer uniform, so that was nothing to be surprised about......But upon seeing the uniform that placed even more emphasis on her good figure, he couldn't help but feel his heart skip a beat.

"Nn......? shidou!?"

Only now did Tohka seem to have noticed Shidou's presence, she widened her eyes and shouted.

"Wh, isn't it extremely rare to meet each other so early in the morning!"

"Aa, aaaah......Go, going to school with Tohka sometimes doesn't seem to be a bad idea......What's wrong?"

Shidou said with his eyes swimming all over the place. The cheeks of the questioned person took on a red tinge, her expression immediately brightened.

"Yeah! Umu, that—I think, is not a bad idea."

Tohka nodded happily. Not knowing why, but having displayed her joy so openly could have been embarrassing.

As Shidou was wondering what to say next, he passed the lunchbox in his hands to her.

"Also, this. This is today's share."

"Ooh!"

Tohka accepted the bento, displaying a wide smile.

"What is the menu for today!?"

"Nn, today is asparagus wrapped in bacon, meat and fried eggs, and macaroni salad with tomatoes. Ah, and rice is fried rice with chicken."

"What—"

After Shidou said that, Tohka revealed an expression of shock, furtively looked around her surroundings and held the lunchbox tightly.

"Is, that okay shidou!"

"Ha......Wh, what?"

Shidou asked cluelessly while Tohka continued in a low voice.

"Asparagus wrapped in bacon, meat with fried eggs and whatever else is too grand and won't we be in a lot of trouble if everyone knew about this......? Who knows, they might cause a riot over this bento—"

"No, they won't."

"Re, really......That's good. Bu, But, to make chicken fried rice from rice that sort of blasphemous act......Isn't this breaking international laws?"

Tohka said in a serious tone. Really now, where on earth did you learn all this from.

"It won't, it won't. ......Ah, do you dislike chicken fried rice? If you want I can exchange lunchboxes with you?"

It was because both of them had the same bento, that made Origami very unhappy. As such, since two weeks ago, the menu had undergone slight changes.

Well, since most of them were leftovers from last night, there was little difficulty in preparing them.

But in the instant that Shidou made that proposal, Tohka hugged the lunchbox and *fuun fuun fuun fuun fuun* shook her head at such a speed that one would worry that her head might fall off.

Shidou looked at her and made a troubled smile. Well, as long as she's happy, then it's worth cooking everyday.

Tohka, with an expression still showing panic, gingerly held her lunchbox, took several deep breaths as though trying to regulate her emotions. At this moment,

"Nu?"

Tohka suddenly widened her eyes, and faced the young girl beside Shidou. It seemed that she only noticed her just now.

"Ooh, isn't this Yoshino? Long time no see!"

Revealing an innocent smile, Tohka started the conversation.

Although a lot had happened, but it seemed that Tohka didn't care about that anymore.

"......Ss!"

However, Yoshino started to retreat with trembling shoulders.

"Fight! Fight!"

"Ss, Uu, Mn."

Under the encouragement of [Yoshinon] in her left hand, Yoshino firmly stood, *Suu~~* took a deep breath, and took a step forward.

As though her determination had been set, her eyebrows moved.

"Aa......, amenbo, akaina, a, i , u, e, o......!" (Translation note here)

Not knowing why, she started to speak sentences used for phonetical practice.

"......Mu."

Tohka mumbled, furrowed her brows in worry and turned to look at Shidou.

"This......What is this? Code words?"

"No......Yoshino?"

Shidou smiled forcefully and asked, [Yoshinon] waved its arms with a *pata pata* sound.

"Aah—, very good! Practice makes perfect! Retake! More AGAIN!"

After speaking a few words with Yoshino. Yoshino nodded slightly, and once again stood in front of Tohka.

"G, g, good......morn, ing......"

Using a voice that was smaller than the volume used to greet Shidou, but still clear nonetheless, she greeted.

"Wooah, good morning!"

"......"

Yoshino's figure trembled for a moment......but held back the urge to escape.

A length of time passed, Tohka and Yoshino stood face to face, not exchanging words.

Hence, Kotori's sharp voice sounded out once more into Shidou's right ear.

"—What's with the silence Shidou. Yoshino is very uneasy. Try saying something encouraging."

"Eh......?Aa, aaaah......"

As Shidou responded, he glanced towards Yoshino.

Now that she mentioned it, she does look different from last time.

"Yoshino, you wore a sunhat today."

That's right, the previous time she was wearing a cap.

"......Ss,......Th, that's right."

Yoshino actually wanted to hide herself by using [Yoshinon], but resisted it in the end, inclining her head and replied.

"That's because......today was very warm, that, Reine-san she...... that."

"Aaa, no wonder. It suits you a lot. You look cute."

"......Ss!"

At those words, Yoshino's face went red with a *Po!*

Looks like that shy personality of hers still hasn't changed. Shidou gave a bitter laugh.

"Hold on, how can you stop the conversation like this. You haven't talked to Tohka yet."

"Aa......Is that so.—He, Hey, Tohka, don't you think so as well?"

"Mu?"

She probably didn't know that the subject of the conversation would turn to her, responding to Shidou with a tone of slight surprise. After which, her vision fell towards Yoshino's direction once more.

"Nn. Umu. It's very cute, Yoshino."

"......Ss! Th......Thank you, very much......"

Yoshino replied while staring at the ground, forcefully raising her head towards Tohka.

"Th, that......Tohka-san, is also......very cute......"

"Nu? Wh, What the......That's embarrassing."

Saying that, Tohka puffed her cheeks. Tohka embarrassingly smiled. once again moving her sight towards Shidou. God knows why, but her cheeks are slightly red.

"shi, shidou do you......think the same as well?"

"Heeei?"

Not expecting the conversation would turn toward himself. Shidou gave an incoherent reply

"Today I'm wearing a different uniform......How does it look?"

Stuff like that had already been noticed the moment they saw each other. Raizen High School's cool summer uniform, totally fits

Tohka. Cute to the point that whoever dares to deny it should be executed, one should start thanking Japan's weather for this.

"Oo,ooh......It suits you."

"......Mu, is that so."

After Tohka said that, the surroundings once again fell into silence.

Instantly, a beeping sound transmitted into his right ear.

"Hey, that's no good at all!"

"Wh, What's wrong......?"

"What's wrong you say, of course that's wrong. What are you doing Shidou. The practice has already started you know?"

"Haa......? Wha, What do you mean?"

As Shidou lowered his voice, Kotori loudly sighed.

"I already told you. Today's lesson, is to not let Tohka get jealous.—Shidou, since you already said 'You look cute' to Yoshino , why didn't you say the same to Tohka?"

"Heeei......?"

Shidou let out a stupid voice as he recalled his previous actions. ......Now that she mentioned it, aside from 'It fits you', nothing else was said about the person herself.

"Th, That's a no go huh......?"

"Of course it was. Saying to other girls flattering words like ' You're cute', but not saying that to her.—Even if she didn't notice, but her emotions have slightly dipped."

"N, no, but Tohka would mind those—"

"I'm telling you."

Kotori spoke with a tone of admonishment.

"While Tohka is indeed a Spirit, and is clearly different from humans in many ways. But, you cannot treat her as different in this particular area. In this field Tohka, after all is just a normal girl ."

"......"

Hearing those words, Shidou bit hard on his lip.

Even though he did say he would let Spirits lead normal lives, but it seems that at some levels, he still viewed her as a special existence.

Shidou tightly clenched his fist and faced Tohka's direction, and spoke.

"Toh,Tohka!"

"Ye,yes......!?"

Was it due to the sudden increase in volume, Tohka seemed to have been frightened by that as her shoulders were trembling slightly.

"Wh, What is it shidou?"

"Y, you're cute too!"

"Hu......hueh?"

Tohka blushed, her body leading back.

Not knowing why, his face started to blush as well. But Shidou disregarded that as he continued to speak.

"Aaa, cute! Extremely cute! That summer uniform totally suits you! When you came out of the condominium you gave me a shock! I couldn't take my eyes off you! All of a sudden I couldn't speak! You're that cute! To the extent that I can't describe it anymore—"

At this point, Tohka used her hands to cover Shidou's mouth, sealing off the words he wanted to say.

"Mu......mugu."

"I, I understand already so time out."

Saying that, Tohka quickly turned her back towards him.

Up till now what he had just said were truly from his heart. ...... But, it seemed a little too effective.

As Shidou was thinking about this, sharp laughter came from the transmitter.

"Pu......, kuku, haha, ahahahahahahahahahahahahaha!"

No need to guess that Kotori was the one laughing. Shidou could faintly hear movements from a chair. It seems that she was adjusting her seating position.

"Very well done Shidou. Just like an idiot would do."

"Sh.......Shut up......I know that myself."

Shidou groaned, his forehead starting to perspire.

"But, it looks like I've made her mad again......Hey Kotori, what should I do now?"

"Haa? What are you talking about?"

"Eh?"

"Tohka's emotions are rising rapidly, and its stopping at the maximum. You've got her into complete excitement. Why don't you walk to Tohka's front to look at her expression? It's going to be interesting more or less."

"Ah......? Wh, what?"

Shidou started to question. But Kotori did not respond to them, and continued to speak.

"Well......I won't punish you for the time being.—Tch, its almost time to call Yoshino back now. You'll be late if you don't go to school now you know?"

Just as Kotori said that, Yoshino gave a deep bow.

"To, Today, I'll......have to go now. Please take care...... Shidou-san, Tohka-san"

"Ooh, come again okay?"

"Nn—goodbye."

Shidou and Tohka lightly waved. Yoshino gave another deep bow, and ran off with a *pata pata* sound.

"......Well let's go now, Tohka."

"Nn, yeah."

Shidou and Tohka started to walk down the asphalt road together......But,

"......Tohka? Can you wait a while?"

Noticing that there was something wrong with Tohka's back view, Shidou stopped in his tracks.

That's right—Tohka's clothes is the cool summer uniform. Meaning to say, that normally underwear—espicially the straps of the bra should slightly show. But......

"Nu? Is there something wrong?"

"Tohka......You, did you properly......put that......thing on?"

"? Put what on?"

"......Br, bra."

Shidou slowly muttered out that noun. But Tohka inclined her head to the side with an incredulous expression.

"Bra? What's that?"

"..................!"

Shidou held his breath, at the same time he pushed Tohka back into the apartment.

"Wh, what's the matter shidou?"

"That's not something that you can just say 'what's the matter'!! You, don't tell me you, haven't been wearing it all this while!?"

"Li, like I said, what is it!?"

"..................!"

Shidou tapped the microphone in his ear. After that, Kotori's voice could be heard.

"Aaa, well, even though I did mention that we had prepared them......But it looks like she doesn't even know what are they used for in the first place."

"Now's not the time for that! It can still be passable if it is the winter uniform, but if the current situation continues......!"

"Yeah, It should be placed in the topmost compartment of Tohka's closet, why don't you teach her how to wear it?"

"M, me......!?"

"Is there anybody else around. Right, you'll be late if you don't hurry up."

"......Aaargh, dammit......"

Shidou with his determination set, turned towards Tohka.

"Tohka, can you take me to your room......!"

"Nu......? Aaa, that's okay I guess......"

Led by a seemingly troubled Tohka into her room. Maybe it was done as a precaution, but before entering her room, they passed through three layers of walls that were extremely similar to those of bank vaults. Seemed like the living space of the apartment was not as large as it appeared to be from the outside. "Here."

Saying this, Tohka opened the door. The layout of the inside was almost the same as that of a normal apartment.

Shidou closed the door and looked further inside along the corridor.

"Ve, very good, next can you bring the item on the topmost compartment in your closet over?

"Nu......? I, I got it."

Tohka took off her shoes while tilting her head, following Shidou's instructions, and brought a pale pink bra over to him.

"Is it okay like this?"

"Erm, aa, aaaa......"

With experience in staring in a girl's underwear of the same age at zero. Shidou waved at Tohka with a red face.

"Al, alright Tohka, bring that to......"

Even though it is certain that no one would listen, but Shidou still felt very embarrassed as he lowered his voice.

The same time the method of wearing a bra was taught via whispering, Tohka's face turned beet red.

"Wha......! Whawhawhat are you saying shidou——!"

As Shidou continued, Tohka raised the bra up high with both hands and stared.

"Put this......breasts...directly......?"

"Aaa, that's correct."

"Mu, muu.......Do I have to wear it?"

"......That's right. It'd be......a problem if you don't."

"In, in what way would it be a problem?"

"No......It's still okay right now, but if it were to rain......that, would......"

A while later, after seemingly understanding what Shidou meant by those words, Tohka's already red face went into a deeper shade. If it were a manga, smoke would probably come out of the ears by now.

"Wha......What are you thinking!"

Tohka yelled as she covered her chest with both hands.

"That, that's why I told you to put it on!"

After that, Tohka stared at the bra once more while groaning " Umu......"

"I, I know that already. I'll wear it for you to see......"

Nodding with red ears, she ran out of the corridor with a *pata pata* sound

"Haaa......that was really dangerous."

Fuuu, Shidou sighed in relief.

—However, after a few minutes, Tohka reappeared at the corridor once more blushing.

"shi, shidou......It is okay like this?"

Finishing her sentence, Tohka walked up shakily.

Not knowing the reason why, but the shirt that was taken off was now worn in reverse.

"Tohka......Wh, what's with that appearance?"

"Thi, how do you hook this......?"

"Aaah......"

In just a sentence, Shidou immediately understood the reason for this situation.

This is her first time wearing a bra after all. Trying to hook it by herself must have been too difficult.

As Shidou frantically thought of a way——

"Enough trying to think, just go and lend her a hand."

Kotori said that as though it was a chore, Shidou's cheeks twitched a few times.

Although he wanted to retort something back......But there was no other alternative method. Shidou swallowed, opening his trembling mouth and spoke.

"I'll......I'll hook it for you, so turn around."

"Wha......"

Tohka stared with widened eyes, failing to think of another way , she was the same as him in this area.

After some hesitation, Tohka slowly turned around, her back facing Shidou.

From the gap between the unbuttoned shirt, he could see that beautiful back. Shidou couldn't help but gulp.

"Do, don't just stare at me......"

Tohka embarrassedly turned her face around, using both hands to hold her shoulders, as though the shirt would immediately fall off.

Shidou fiercely shook his head.

"I, I understand......"

The same time sweat started dripping from Shidou's cheeks, he was muttering "It can't be helped, it can't be helped", using trembling fingers to hook the bra. At the same time,

......Next time I'm going to buy a front hook, Shidou firmly decided in his heart.

"Muuuu......I feel uncomfortable moving around in this."

"......Bear with it. That's how it is."

"Mu, muuuu."

Tohka looked unaccustomed as she kept turning her body. Shidou supported his forehead that still had not cooled down and sighed.

Just like that, around ten minutes passed in silence.

Shidou and Tohka who just walked into a crossroad, seemed to hear the footsteps of someone running over.

"Eh?"

Shidou's eyebrow twitched as he turned to face the direction of the sound, but it was too late.

On the left, a girl who looked like a high schooler, was biting on a piece of bread and,

"I'm late I'm late~!"

Saying the lines that even modern shoujo manga would leave out, she came running over at a horrifying speed. On a side note, even though she was biting on toast, the pronunciation of her lines were perfect.

"What......!"

The intention to dodge flashed, but it was too late. Shidou was knocked down by the high school girl, falling on his butt.

"Aa....Ow ow ow."

"Ar, are you okay, shidou——!"

Tohka swiftly crouched and asked in concern.

"Yeah, I'm fine but......"

Shidou patted his behind as he stood up, facing the direction of the girl who knocked him down. If Shidou, as a guy, felt the force of the collision that hard, it must be unbearable for the girl.

"It—hurts!"

As expected, the girl at a distance close to them, let out such a shout. However——

"Nnwha......"

Shidou's face turned red, his shoulders shook.

That's totally understandable. That's because the girl that fell by the road, splendidly flipped her skirt, revealing her butt to Shidou.

......I don't know why, but it felt like when she fell down, she took the opportunity to roll up her skirt in the chaos.

"——Kya!?"

But Shidou's suspicions, were instantly blown away by the girl's shout.

The girl hastily covered her underwear, looking at Shidou with flushed cheeks.

"Did, Did you see!?"

"No, no, that......"

While Shidou was getting troubled over how to reply, the girl slowly stood up and walked up to Shidou.

"I've been seen by a guy like that......Now I can't get married anymore!"

"Haa......!? No, that."

At this point, the girl suddenly pressed her body onto Shidou

"Hyii......!?"

"Wha——!"

Not just Shidou, even Tohka was left speechless.

But, the girl didn't mind at all, using her finger she drew circles on Shidou's chest and continued.

"Will you......take responsibility?"

"Eh, no, even if you say that......"

Perspiration flowed down from his face, Shidou shifted his line of sight away. Aaa, the weather is so hot. So hot, so hot.

"St, still not letting go, you!"

The instant Tohka wanted to seize the girl's shoulder, the girl lightly dodged, leaving Shidou's side.

"Please, won't you take some time to consider!......What would... ...happen next."

After saying that, not knowing why, she ran off in the direction that she came from.

Tohka, after looked on, stunned for a moment, "Uu—", she pouted her lips and gazed in Shidou's direction.

"Wh, what's the matter......Tohka."

"......Nothing, its nothing"

Tohka turned away, and walked towards the school's direction.

"Wait, hey, Tohka—"

This moment, the transmitter in the right ear started to beep.

"Shidou, out~~"

"Wha......?"

Shidou knitted his eyebrows, following that was Kotori's sigh of impatience.

"Shidou, what were you doing. Saying that was a definite no no. You can't let Tohka throw a tantrum."

At this point, Shidou finally realized the situation.

"Don't, don't tell me that girl was......<Ratatoskr>'s......!?"

"Correct. One of our staff. Why, don't tell me you're disappointed?"

"......Guwuaa."

Shidou's face twitched as he pulled his hair.

"Aa—aa, why don't you make a more peaceful way of dealing with that.——Or, properly do something that would salvage the situation."

"Sal, salvage?"

"Yes, gently hold her shoulders, whisper softly into her ear: ' Don't throw a tantrum already, I'm not interested in other girls other than you......?' or stuff like that"

"Is that even possible......! In the first place, why would doing that make Tohka feel better?"

"Hehe, don't say that, it just may work. You forgot about just now? To girls, they love to listen to good things about themselves."

"Guh......"

"Alright alright. More importantly, are you okay with just standing here like an idiot? Tohka's silhouette is almost gone now. "

"! Ha......"

Shidou's shoulders gave a jolt, moving his line of vision to the front. But, Tohka's figure had already disappeared.

"Oh no......"

He broke into a frantic run, but surprisingly, he quickly saw Tohka's figure once more.

As though hiding around the corner, Tohka stood there with her cheeks slightly puffed.

"Toh, Tohka......"

"......Nn. Let's go, shidou!"

Looks like she was waiting for Shidou, but that unhappy tone still did not disappear.

"Oooh, okay......"

Shidou gave a short reply, his brain furiously thinking.

Taking one deep gulp, his determination set, slowly bring the arms around Tohka's shoulders......That was supposed to be the plan.

But, it seems that he didn't have the courage to do so.

Softly patting Tohka on the shoulder, Tohka turned her face around. And then, "D, don't, don't throw a tantrum already, I'm, I'm not interested in other girls other than you......?"

There's nothing to lose if it was said, Shidou followed the instructions and did so.

"......!"

When Shidou finished, Tohka immediately widened her eyes and stared.

"You, whawhawhawhat are you saying shidou............!"

"N, no......so, sorry, forget about that."

At the same time he received Tohka's reply, he felt so embarrassed that he wanted to die. Shidou waved his hand trying to hide it.

"Mu......muuu."

Not knowing why, Tohka softly groaned, and once again started walking

......but, it felt, as if her footsteps were lighter than just now.

From the Itsuka residence to Raizen High School, is a walking distance of thirty minutes.

If it were the usual, Shidou would have reached school at around eight o' clock——But because of waiting for Tohka, and various incidents that happened, they were slightly late.

The hands of the clock located on the school exterior pointed the time to 8:20 am. There was still ten minutes till morning homeroom.

"......We'll be late unless we hurry."

"Nn, you're right."

Saying that, they walked in the entrance. At this moment.

"Itsuka-senpai!"

Waiting at the entrance was a girl that seemed to be a freshman, called out to Shidou.

"Eh......me?"

"Yes......"

The girl looked uneasy, shyly held out a letter like object to Shidou.

"I've always liked Senpai! Please, won't you read this?"

"Ha......haaa!?"

Shidou stared at the girl handed over to him. That envelope with a heart for a seal.

Looks extremely like an old fashioned love letter.

"L......, love letter......!?"

His body shook. Shidou took a step backwards.

......But, very soon he noticed something. There's no reason for stuff like this to keep occurring, most likely she's also one of < Ratatoskr>'s staff. If I don't firmly reject this, there's no doubt that the alarm will ring like last time, and I'll be forced to play that punishment game.

Shidou swallowed his saliva, took over the envelope, intending to tear it to pieces.——However, looking at the girl's teary eyes, couldn't help but stop himself.

......Even though I know she's one of the staff, it would go against my conscience to do that.

Shidou handed the letter back to the girl and shook his head.

"So, sorry. I don't have the ability to answer to your expectations......"

As soon as Shidou finished, the girl's expression looked as though she were about to burst into tears.

"That......that's right. I'm sorry for being so direct......!"

The girl quickly turned, and ran off down the corridor.

"Araara. What a pity"

"Humph, who'd fall for such an obvious trick?"

"......Although we did plan for a love letter event, but our staff hasn't made a single move yet you know?"

"Eh?"

Shidou's face involuntarily twitched.

Thus, Shidou looked around with an embarrassed expression, and spotted another girl. Just like the one before, a love letter was in her hands.

"Th, that is......"

"One of our staff."

"Th, then the other kid was?"

"Accepting a love letter from a kouhai, letting this once in a lifetime chance escape you. It's been hard on you to reject that love letter."

".................."

Shidou moved his line of vision around wordlessly.

......? What did she mean by that. I don't get it.

"Well, at least you didn't receive a confession in front of Tohka, that's why it’s still considered safe."

"......Is, is that so?"

Shidou replied with a hollow tone of voice.

"? Did the girl from just now want something, shidou?"

Tohka's incredulous voice came from behind. Shidou hastily shook his head.

"No......it, it's nothing."

At this point of time, he once again heard Kotori's voice.

"But, that means that today's punishment can't be used already. Too——bad."

"......What were you planning to do to me if I failed?"

"Nn—? I was going to spread Shidou's photos of the past when you put wax in your hair, giving off expressions like 'Don't I look dashing like this?' all over town."

"Don't spread that!"

"Then, it’s also about time for me to attend homeroom, time to go to school. That, don't forget today's lessons."

Leaving behind that sentence, the transmission was cut.

"Really now......"

Sliding the door and entering the classroom, at the blackboard near the entrance writing something was his classmate Tonomachi Hiroto, who looked towards Shidou.

"Aa——? I was wondering why you were later than usual, so it's because you were together with Tohka-chan. U——wa, u——wa."

Saying that with a sad face, the chalk in his hands were drawing an aiaigasa[3A 1]. Of course the names were [Itsuka] and [Yatogami].

"Are you a grade-schooler?"

Shidou dryly laughed.

However Tohka revealed an extremely troubled expression, taking turns to look at Shidou and Tonomachi.

"Mu...muuu, we can't go to school together......? I didn't know that there was such a rule......"

Tonomachi waved his arms in panic, as though trying to erase words on a blackboard.

"It, it's not like that——How could that be Tohka-chan? This can be said to be a model of perfection——or should I say that it is something like a riajuu explosion——"

Responding to Tonomachi's explanation, Tohka widened her eyes.

"Riajuu? What's that?"

"Aaa—that's someone like Shidou who does not suffer from a lack of girls, a Fucking Nice Guy."

"Hey......"

Shidou glared at Tonomachi from the corner of his eye. But Tonomachi did not back off in fear, showing a wide grin instead.

"Mu, is that so. But......That's troubling. If shidou were to explode, I would be...... extremely sad. Can't you do something about it?"

With no shred of sarcasm or joking around, Tohka innocently said.

Under that innocent gaze, Tonomachi——

"Cur......Curse youuuuuuu!"

Yelled loudly and ran out to the corridor.

"Waah, What, Tonomachi he..."

"Well, forget it, don't mind him. He'll come back after a while."

Saying that Shidou, went towards his seat at the second row.

Looking at the seat on his left. As usual, a beautiful girl was sitting there.

Pale skin with an expression like a doll, the girl seem to create an atmosphere that did not seem that she belongs to this world.

"Good, good morning......Tobiichi"

"............"

What a terrifying pressure.

"——Morning, Origami."

Just as he was about to repeat himself again, the girl—Tobiichi Origami nodded her head slightly in response.

The usual cold greeting. However, today will not end so easily.

Origami looked over Shidou's shoulder and identified Tohka's figure, her gaze sharpened.

"You two came to school together."

"Eh? Aa, aaaah......that's, that's right."

"Is that so?"

Not showing any expression, there was no differences in her tone either. Then why, is there a feeling of overwhelming pressure.

"......Nu?"

It is impossible to not notice such an atmosphere. In the seat on Shidou's right, Tohka faced Origami after placing her lunch and bag down.

"What, do you want something?"

"Not really."

"......Humph."

Not hiding her displeasure, Tohka made a sound.

That's right, normally Tohka would not treat any one with hostility......But this girl was special.

Well, it really can't be helped.

Origami belongs to the JGSDF's AST—Meaning to say, humans that plan to use military might to destroy Spirits like Tohka.

And truthfully speaking, before Shidou sealed Tohka's power, they did have an all-out battle with each other.

Furthermore, Origami had her parents killed by Spirits, possessing abnormal hostility and hate towards the Spirits. It can't be helped that they are not getting along very well.

At this moment in time, the bell sounded from the PA system.

"......! Al, alright already, homeroom's starting! Tohka, sit properly, okay!?"

"Nu? Uu, umu......."

Tohka hurriedly sat down in her seat.

Shidou did the same, thanking the heavens in his heart as he did so.

The scattered students gradually returned to their seats. On a side note, Tonomachi had also crept back into the classroom through the rear entrance. He's surprisingly a man who sticks to rules.

Not long after, the classroom door opened. A short curly haired female wearing glasses walked into the classroom.

Resembling a student no matter how you looked at her, but this was really a homeroom teacher in the flesh. Okamine Tamae twenty nine years old (nickname: Tama-chan)

"Great, good morning everybody."

After making the usual greeting, Tama-chan-sensei was taking out the attendance book——And suddenly stopped.

"Aaa, that's right. There's something I have to tell you all."

After that, she surveyed the chattering classroom with eyes that seem to hint at something else.

"Huhu, well, this class, is going to have a transfer student!"

After a short pause, Tama-chan-sensei said. Instantly, the classroom erupted with a resounding " OOOOOOOOOOOOOHHHHH".

Well, that was understandable.

After all speaking of transfer students, they are one of the biggest events of campus life. Truthfully speaking, when Tohka first came to this class, everyone was just as excited.

"......Nn?"

At this moment, Shidou tilted his head.

Tohka just transferred (let's just put it like this for now) here a few months ago, why would there be a new transfer student be in this class, Shidou's mind surfaced these thoughts. In addition, the number of classmates shouldn't be less than that of other classes.

"Well, please come in—"

Shidou's train of thoughts, were cut short by Tama-chan-sensei's easygoing voice.

The door slowly opened and the transfer student entered the classroom.

Instantly, the classroom fell into complete silence.

Appearing was a young girl. Even though it is such a hot day, she still wore her winter uniform's jacket and black stockings.

Just like a shadow, that description was very fitting.

Pitch black hair, her long fringe covered the left side of her face, aside from the right eye nothing else could be glimpsed.

But, not just that, that girl was the same as Tohka—a Spirit possessing otherworldly beauty—having a coquettish attractiveness that did not lose out to her.

Gu, the sound of everyone swallowing reached Shidou's ears

"Now then, please introduce yourself to everyone."

"Nn."

Under Tama-chan's encouragement, the girl nodded her head with a graceful movement, picking up the chalk with her hand.

And on the blackboard, wrote down the name [Tokisaki Kurumi] with graceful penmanship.

"My name is Tokisaki Kurumi."

Then, using a larger volume, the girl, Tokizaki Kurumi continued to say.

"I, am a Spirit."

"......!?"

That, noun.

Shidou had a uncanny feeling as though his heart was being squeezed tightly.

In the midst of the rowdy students. Only Tohka and Origami, made similar reactions as Shidou.

Perhaps Kurumi had noticed this fact, for a moment, she turned towards Shidou and smiled.

"......Sss."

"Eh...eheh How......great! That was quite an introduction with impact there!"

Perhaps noticing that Kurumi did not wish to continue, Tama-chan *Pa!* clapped her hands to indicate that it was the end of the introduction.

"Well then Tokisaki-san, would you please sit in that empty seat over there?"

"Nn. But, before that, I have a favor to ask first."

"Hm? What is that?"

As Tama-chan-sensei said that, Kurumi raised a single finger.

"Due to the recent transfer I'm still not used to the school. It's fine even if it is after school but I wish that someone can take me around the campus."

"Aa, right. That's true......Then can the class representative——"

However, Kurumi started to walk in the middle of the teacher's words, stopping right in front of Shidou's desk.

"Hey—can I ask you to help? Shidou-san."

"Eh......"

Shidou faced with this unexpected turn of events, could only dazedly sound out with his eyes becoming dots.

"M,me......? And how in the world did you know my name?"

"You can't......?"

Kurumi looked extremely hurt, revealing an expression as though she might cry if she were to be rejected.

"N, no, that kind of thing......"

"It's a promise then. I'm in your care, Shidou-san."

Kurumi gave a sweet smile, under the eyes of the stunned classmates, started to walk towards her designated seat with light footsteps.

Chapter 2: A Spirit's Invitation

The moment Tama-chan-sensei left the classroom after morning homeroom, Shidou immediately fished out his handphone from his pocket and called Kotori.

Moments later, a sound indicating that the connection was successful rang out, Kotori's voice came out from the handphone a while later.

"Hello—hello, Onii-chan?"

An easygoing voice that was totally different from that sarcastic tone earlier. It was the normal Kotori, not in commander mode.

"Hey, Kotori."

"Really now—why are you calling at such a time? If the phone had rang ten seconds earlier, it would have been confiscated by the teacher you know—"

"You should have properly set it to silent mode first."

"I kinda forgot to do that today—"

Kotori unhappily said.

"Well, is anything the matter?"

"Ss, ah, that's right. The truth is......"

As Shidou continued to speak, he glanced towards Kurumi.

Even though she said something shocking like "I am a Spirit" during her introduction, Kurumi was currently subjected to a situation where she was being surrounded by a sea of people and questions. It was not just the students from Class Four, in order to sneak a peek at the rumoured beautiful transfer girl, even students from other classes have gathered. It was just like the first day Tohka arrived.

At this point, he accidentally made eye contact with Kurumi. Kurumi faced his direction and slightly smiled, Shidou instantly blushed and held his breath.

"Onii-chan?"

"Aa, aaah......Today my class had, a transfer student......but that person, said."

"What?"

"I am...... a Spirit."

"............"

When Shidou finished speaking, Kotori did not answer.

In response to that was the sound of rustling clothes. It was just like, the sound of changing the ribbons of her hair.

"——Tell me the details."

Kotori continued speaking with a tone that was different from just now.

"Even if you want me to tell you in detail......It's just like how I told you. When the transfer student made her introduction, she said 'I am a Spirit'......Although there is no basis to it, but it felt as if she was saying it to me."

"Isn't that just your imagination?"

"......"

"Well, forget it. A person that knows such terms like Spirits is already very abnormal. I'll investigate more."

"Oh......Please do."

Just as Shidou ended the phone call, the bell indicating the start of the first lesson rang.

At a corner of Tenguu Base. Inside the observation room that compiles data on Spirit wavelength throughout the cities of Southern Kanto region.

"......Impossible."

The AST team leader Kusakabe Ryoko, frowned as she let out a groan.

"Is there a mistake? This."

The man currently operating the central control tower——Sergeant First Class Ashimura turned to face her, shaking his sweating face at the same time.

"I'm extremely sorry. But the precision of the observation machines, even if within the country it is also considered to be the best."

"......Is that so."

Rechecking the numbers shown on the screen, after making sure that there was no mistake, forcefully let out a sigh as though she was trying to discard her frustrations.

Shown on the screen was the numerical results of a certain human.

No, using the word human would be lying.

After all, those numbers, insinuates at a calamity that kills off the world.

"......Spirit, transferring into high school? That joke is not even amusing."

That's right. Today at 9 am in the morning, she received the message from Origami to the base.

Requesting to investigate, because there is a transfer student who self proclaimed that she was a Spirit in my class——

Even though she was doubtful, she still ran the scanner on the girl, but——

Ryoko wiped her forehead. Sweat damped her sleeve. Despite the air conditioning being turned on, her skin had become slightly moist.

This of course had a reason. To transfer into high school, a family register and residential addresses is a must, but there are other documents required for the process as well.

A dangerous creature able to eradicate an entire street with just a single finger; yet she was able to escape this field of observation, and possessing the knowledge of how human society works and knowing how to use it effectively. It was impossible not to shudder thinking about that.

"Leader? What are you doing?"

At this point, a weird greeting expressed behind her.

Only one member would use this kind of words. Turning her head, Mana was standing there as expected.

"......Nn?"

Mana showed a serious expression, furrowing her brows in displeasure.

"——This is......finally showed up huh, <Nightmare>."

"<Nightmare>?"

Ryoko asked in surprise. Mana forcefully let out a sigh with her brows locked together.

"Codename <Nightmare>. ——The one that I'm hunting, the most brutal Spirit."

"Most brutal......Spirit?"

Ryoko shivered as she repeated that solemn phrase, "Nn", Mana nodded her head.

"The Spirit that caused the deaths of at least ten thousand at present. If we take those victims who haven't been identified into account, the numbers should be a few times larger."

"Ten, ten thousand......!? Un, unbelievable, why wasn't there an evacuation call? And also, a spacequake of that scale——"

"You're wrong."

As though trying to interrupt Ryoko, Mana voiced out melancholically.

"The spacequake that <Nightmare> causes is merely that of the usual Spirits. Even though we can't say that there were no victims, the numbers did not reach a hundred."

"Th, then why......"

"The reason is very simple. ——directly, killing with her own hands. Those ten thousand humans."

"..................."

Ryoko held her breath.

The <Princess> and <Hermit> that had appeared in Tenguu City in the past, even though they did cause severe spacequakes, they did not actively attack humans.

However, if a monster capable of rending the earth, were to start killing people by its own will.

How horrifying would that be. As an AST member, such a scene was easily pictured.

"——Then, what preparations should we make?"

"Eh?"

Mana asked as she lightly stretched, Ryoko dryly questioned.

"If a Spirit appears. There's no other thing to consider other than killing it."

"That's true......But, don't we need to evacuate the citizens? After all this situation is——"

"There's no need to worry. Please leave it to me.——Dealing with [that], is what I'm best at."

"Aa, wait, hold on!"

Ryoko grabbed Mana's arm as she was trying to quickly leave.

"? Is there a problem. Isn't it better to deal with it earlier?"

"......I'll say this first, the team leader here is me. You are not to take action by yourself."

"............"

Mana pondered for a while as though she was considering something, then slightly raised her hand.

"Understood. I'll follow your orders."

However, she then gave Ryoko a look as though she was judging something.

"But, please do not forget. I am posted here by the [Association], having permission from the General to take independent action."

"............I understand."

Ryoko twisted her face in boredom, releasing Mana's hand.

The hands of the clock hanging above the blackboard, has already gone round three times.

In Shidou's line of sight, the homeroom lesson before going home has started. Accompanying the bell and entering the classroom was Tama-chan-sensei, who opened the attendance book and started to relay information.

A normal and unexciting scene. However, at present, Shidou was being tortured by an uncanny panic.

To give a reason why......

"............"

Kurumi took the chance when the teacher was not focused to turn towards Shidou, making eye contact and lightly waving her hand.

"That, um."

Feeling that it would be rude to not respond, Shidou gave a bitter smile and waved back.

""............""

As such Tohka and Origami who sat beside Shidou, not making any jokes, were using stares sharp enough to cause dermatitis to stare at Shidou.

"......Wh, what should I do?"

As Shidou sighed in despair, Tama-chan-sensei closed the attendance booklet.

"That's all for homeroom today. ——Ah, one more thing, recently in this district, there seems to be cases of disappearances happening. Everyone, please try to move in groups. Remember to go back home before dark, okay?"

"............Nn?"

In response to Tama-chan-sensei's words that seemed to be aiming at children, Shidou slightly raised his eyebrows.

Now that it was mentioned, the morning news seems to have also reported similar cases. As the name Tenguu City came up, his attention was caught.

It was okay if it was Shidou, but it could be worrisome for Kotori's case.

......Well, if it was that imouto-sama, the number of things to worry about would probably be larger.

Just as Shidou was thinking about that, the call to stand at attention was enunciated. Shidou got up from his seat and bowed. Apart from the clattering sounds made by the tables and chairs when they were standing up, chatting between students can also be heard.

It was after school. But ——Shidou still had stuff to do.

Shidou took out a miniature earphone from his pocket, equipping it onto his right ear.

Very soon, an enthusiastic voice vibrated his eardrums.

"——It's time. Are you ready, Shidou?"

A young voice, possessing a large amount of pressure. Shidou's sister, Itsuka Kotori's commander mode.

Although it can't be confirmed from here, but the elites on the bridge of <Fraxinus>, should be fully prepared to conquer the Spirit.

"I don't believe it, it really is a Spirit. ——To tell you the truth, I thought it was just Shidou's delusions."

"......Hey."

In response to Kotori's joke, Shidou slanted his eyes.

But that was not without reason. To tell the truth, Shidou himself was doubtful. Spirits transferring to school as a transfer student and what not.

The result of Kotori's observations of Kurumi, was sent to Shidou's handphone at lunchtime.

In conclusion——Kurumi is, a real Spirit.

"——Hey, it can be considered a good thing. The other party has already sent an invitation. If the alarm doesn't sound off, the AST can't be nosy as well; isn't that an outcome that we've hoped for? Right now, please focus on raising the other party's feelings towards you and let her fall in love."

"......Nn. I guess......you're right."

Shidou half-heartedly said.

It's just as Kotori says. However, Kurumi's motive is still not clear at present, Shidou's heart felt complicated.

"What's with you, that kind of cowardly response. Going to KISS with another Spirit, you're feeling conflicted?"

"...........Th, that's not it......But, no, its not like I'm not in conflict here......"

"Good then. Unfortunately, it looks like we don't have enough time to chat anymore?"

"Eh?"

As Shidou let out a stupid response, his shoulder was poked a few times by someone.

"Shidou-san, Shidou-san."

"Uuooh......!?"

Because it was too sudden, Shidou got a fright.

"Sorry, did I scare you?"

The girl standing there——Kurumi said with an apologetic look .

"To, Tokisaki......"

"Ufufu, it's all right to call me Kurumi."

"Aa, aaah......Then, Kurumi."

After Shidou said that, Kurumi continued while smiling happily.

"Can you bring me around the school? I'll be in your care."

"Oo, ooh."

Shidou looked as though he was trying to hold down his accelerated heart beat, placing his hand on his chest as he nodded.

............A beautiful appearance just like it was man-made. An attitude that exudes grace. Elegant movements. Through Shidou's five senses, strongly emphasized her existence.

It was almost as though the eyeballs and the brain rejected all other impurities other than Kurumi, placing them outside his recognition.

"Ahem!"

"......!"

Shidou was brought to his senses by that fake cough. Turning to the sound, Tohka was glaring at his direction while folding her arms.

"Ab, about that......"

Looks like he was found out. Shidou made a sound trying to explain.

"Well then! Let's hurry and go. Fufu, I'm so happy."

However, before he had time to finish, Kurumi started to walk towards the corridor with light footsteps.

"Aa......he, hey!"

"Uufufu, Shidou-san should hurry up as well."

"——Shidou, now Kurumi is our top priority. Hurry up and go after her. Tohka's mental state, still has not reached critical point. Buying a yellow bean bun for her when you return home should fix that."

At this point, Kotori's voice sounded out from his right ear.

Looking to his right, a displeased Tohka entered his line of sight ......But he had no other choice. Shidou left behind a "Sorry!", chasing after Kurumi out to the corridor.

"Well then, where should we start looking?"

Kurumi, who was waiting not far away from the classroom, inclined her head and asked.

"Aa, aaah......that's right."

At the same time, Shidou was at a loss, Kotori's voice rang into his right ear.

15000 meters above Tenguu Base.

The secret organization <Ratatoskr>'s airship <Fraxinus> was currently floating.

Materializing randomly, dangerous lifeforms that causes destruction to this world, [Spirits].

Letting her fall in love and become powerless, staff members burdened with this difficult and extremely amusing task, are currently in the midst of battle.

At the bridge located in <Fraxinus>'s center, the thirty staff members inclusive of their commander Kotori were gathered. Everyone went to their workstations, controlling the command tower with experienced movements.

"Favorability is at 45.5. No change at all."

"Mental state, green on average. A stable state."

"Spirit wavelength 150.0. Difference from the previous scan at an acceptable range of minimum 3.4."

"——Umu, so everything is all right?"

Asked Kotori, who was reclining in <Fraxinus>'s commander seat located at the centre of the bridge.

The ribbons tied in her hair were black. The military uniform on her shoulders were maroon. No matter how you looked at it, she resembled a cosplaying girl who was being influenced by movies.

However, the cute looking girl who is totally out of place in the bridge of the ship, after surveying her subordinates, eased herself and looked at the screen.

On that giant screen, showed that Spirit, Tokisaki Kurumi's image.

The various factors on the screen, through the windows of the subordinates' computers, after processing through the AI, were indicated in real time in wordform.

That's right, it was just like the images of a galge.

At this moment, Kurumi in the screen tilted her head, her cute lips slightly raised.

"Well then, where should we start looking?"

"Aa, aaah......That's right."

Following that, through the speaker, Shidou's voice rang out.

One can understand without asking. It was a voice that was troubled over the sudden question. Kotori sighed as she pressed the communicator, bringing the microphone to her mouth.

"Shidou, hold on for a moment. Let our side take a look at the situation."

The instant Kotori spoke, a new window opened up at the main screen.

This was the minimap of Raizen High School where Shidou was currently at. Various classrooms and facilities were indicated on top, the locations of Shidou and Kurumi were indicated by red dots. Following that, various routes were shown after calculating the distance of their current location and movement routes.

The first place to go is ——

The rooftop. The infirmary. The cafeteria, commissionary.

Which one to choose.

"——A great opportunity."

A voice, sounded out from behind the commander's seat where Kotori was at.

Turning around, a tall youth stood there with his hand on his chin. He is the vice commander of <Fraxinus>, Kannazuki Kyouhei.

"It's wonderful to leave the decision of sequence of movement to us. If the sequence is organized correctly, it could very well bring about an impactful outcome."

"Well, you're right——Everyone, choose! Five seconds!"

After Kotori finished, the monitor in her hand swiftly displayed the result.

"Umu, the rooftop's the most popular choice huh?"

"Of course, the rooftop can be said to be the school's best hangout place for youths! A place full of freedom and an excellent scenery to boot! There's no other choice than this!"

Just as Kotori muttered, below the bridge, <Dimension Breaker > Nakatsugawa loudly yelled.

"But......Normally speaking, the rooftop is usually locked right? Because it's too dangerous."

However, next to him, <On Probation> Minowa, used his hand to support his chin as he spoke.

"Eh......Is, is that so?"

With that, Nakatsugawa slightly protested. However, Kotori let out a cough before speaking.

"There's no problem. The school currently has numerous helpers infiltrated within, it's possible to open it using the key before Shidou and Kurumi arrives."

"Th, that's right! So the rooftop is still the best——"

"Hold it right there!"

At this point, <Tired Too Early> Kawagoe looked over from the right.

"How can you leave out the infirmary? Legally placed beds, and curtains to block people's sight. Isn't it one of the few places that makes one excited in a school!"

"Wh, what's with you! Aren't you being too perverted! The rooftop is an excellent place......!"

"Humph......why don't you clean up your nosebleed before you start to protest, eh Nakatsugawa-kun?"

"Ha......!"

"Is that so?"

Listening to the verbal battle between the rooftop faction and the infirmary faction, Kotori looked at the image on by her hand once more.

"Speaking of which, who voted for ?"

Once Kotori asked, a hand was raised immediately.

"......It's me."

A woman looking as tired as hell, opening her eyes that had thick dark circles, turned her vision over here. Murasame Reine. < Fraxinus>'s Analysis Officer whom Kotori fully places her trust in.

"Reine huh? What a surprise. Can you please tell me the reason? "

"......Aaah. It's not a reason that is alarming. Just simple elimination, that's all."

"Elimination? Is the rooftop and the infirmary a no go?"

With that, Reine shook her head.

"............It's not like that. Just that, the infirmary has a health teacher frequenting the area. If we want to bring out the destructiveness of the infirmary itself, we would still have to wait for another thirty minutes. ......The rooftop has a similar reason to it. If you ask why, the scenery of the setting sun...... wouldn't that be wonderful?"

After hearing Reine's words, Kotori slightly raised the edge of her lips.

"——As expected, you are quite the romanticist huh, Reine."

Following that, she brought the microphone to her mouth.

"Shidou, you heard that? Bring her to the cafeteria and the comissionary."

"......Right, well then, shall we go to the cafeteria and comissionary to have a look first? It'd be necessary in the future."

"Nn, I don't mind."

When Shidou finished, a cute smile appeared on Kurumi as she lightly nodded.

Don, don, Kurumi's hallway slippers gave off a sound similar to that of a clapper, walking to Shidou's side.

"Well then, let's go."

"Oo, oh."

Overwhelmed by Kurumi's enthusiasm, he started walking after some difficulty.

To reach the commissionary on the first floor, they have to reach the staircase on the west building first. The two of them walked down the corridor with leisurely footsteps.

At this point, the students who are returning home, shot glances over.

——Wah—who's that girl, so cute—. A transfer student? Isn't next to her Itsuka-kun from Class 4, what's going on? Aaa, looks like she wanted him to personally bring her around the school. Eh, isn't Itsuka Yatogami's husband? But I've heard that even Tobiichi was taken down by him, promised to be his mistress or something.

Hey hey, not satisfied with two-timing now he wants to defile the transfer student? Feels like Itsuka-kun is being a horny playboy!

......Whatever you people say.

The same time his face twitched, he tried hard to ignore those hurtful words, accelerating his footsteps.

Then, a voice different from them, Kotori's voice entered his ear.

"Nnnn......?"

"? Is something the matter, Kotori?"

"No......There are two people tailing your movements.......There's a possibility that you have been marked by someone."

"Eh, eh eh.....?"

Faced with such a dangerous possibility, Shidou couldn't help but cry out.

"Quiet. ......Our side will proceed to confirm this. First put your concentration on Kurumi. ——And also, you are walking with a girl, why aren't you saying anything, so dense."

"Eh? ah......"

Due to being overly conscious of the surrounding stares as well as the nervousness of walking with a girl, he had left Kurumi by herself.

"......Oh crap."

While muttering, he peeked in Kurumi's direction.

Suddenly——Shidou felt his own heart violently skipped a beat .

But there was a reason behind it of course. Because Kurumi was using her right eye that was not covered by her hair, to gaze straight at Shidou.

Naturally, their eyes met. In that instant, Kurumi gave a sweet smile as though she was truly overjoyed from the bottom of her heart. It was as if she was waiting for Shidou to look at her direction this whole time.

"Ku, Kurumi. Is it okay if you walk while not looking at the front?"

Shidou asked her with a squeak, Kurumi widened her eyes.

"You noticed that? And you're even concerned for me, Shidou-san is really gentle."

"N, no......that kind of thing!"

"Please don't be modest. It was my fault for staring at your side view and getting mesmerized."

"St, staring......!?"

Shidou felt his blushing cheeks.——Wh,whwhwhat did this girl just say? Stare? No no, I don't understand. This normal looking appearance is totally wasn't worth looking at, this fact Shidou was totally aware of.

"Why are you going all soft over her words, Shidou."

Hearing Kotori's sighing voice, Shidou's shoulders violently shook.

"So, sorry."

"......But, this is indeed a type that we have never encountered before. Not only integrating herself into society——she also mastered the ability to get into other's good books."

Kotori made an "Umu" sound while she was pondering.

"It's because she's an interesting existence that's why we need to know more information......Well, we'll ask her while raising her favorability. ——Looks like choices have just arrived. Wait one moment."

The screen on the bridge of <Fraxinus>, once again showed a multiple choice window.

"The thing about Spirits that you mentioned in the morning, what did you mean by that?"

"Kurumi, which school did you used to attend?"

"Kurumi, what kind of panties are you wearing today?"

"All members, choose!"

Accompanying Kotori's shout, the members below the bridge pressed a key at the same time.

The result was quickly displayed on Kotori's monitor.

"As expected, looks like its ."

The result everyone chose was the same as herself, Kotori rested her chin on her hand.

"A proper choice. Kurumi shouldn't know that Shidou possesses knowledge on Spirits. It'd be good to try making her waver."

Behind, Kannazuki said it as such.

"That's true.——On a side note Kannazuki, which one did you choose?"

"I chose ."

"Let's hear the reason first."

Kotori turned her body around and said.

"The thighs that are being isolated by black coloured stockings can be said to be the treasure of humans. Did you have to ask why ?"

Kotori snapped her fingers. For an instant, two extremely muscled giants entered the bridge, grabbing Kannazuki's two arms .

"Take him away."

"Yes!"

The two men answered at the same time, dragging Kannazuki off with them.

"Com, commander! Have mercy! Have mercccccccyyyyyy!!!!"

Pishuu following this sound, the door closed.

In the midst of the silent bridge of the ship, Kotori sighed while she spoke.

"'Kurumi, what kind of panties are you wearing today?'......Hey, what do you guys think of this choice?"

"We, well, you obviously can't use such a dirty line to raise the atmosphere."

The staff members at the lower portion of the bridge replied with bitter smiles.

At this point, Kotori suddenly twitched her eyebrows.

"Ah!"

At the same time Kotori changed her position, her elbow pressed the switch of her microphone. To put it simply, the conversation from just now was heard by Shidou——

"He, hey......Kurumi, what kind of panties are you wearing today?"

In the image, Shidou who took that as a command, really did follow it to the letter.

"Panties......huh?"

"......!"

As Kurumi dazedly questioned back, Shidou finally realized what a ridiculous line he had just said.

"Ah, no, just now that was——"

As he hurriedly waved his arms around, he jabbed the earphone as though protesting.

"Idiot, that was not an instruction just now! the correct choice was . '"The thing about Spirits that you mentioned in the morning, what did you mean by that?'"

"Ha......Haa!?"

"Well first of all try to clear up the misunderstanding! Just now that was just a joke, then start asking the real question!"

"Oo, oh......" Shidou softly groaned, turning towards Kurumi.

"A, about that, Kurumi."

However upon looking at Kurumi's expressions and movements, he couldn't help but stop.

As Kurumi raised her eyes to look at Shidou, she suddenly lifted the edges of her pleated skirt.

"......Want, to see?"

"Eh!? N, no, just now that was——"

Even though it was not like he did not want to look, he couldn't very well say it outright.

Just as Shidou was in a mess, Kurumi looked at her surroundings, then hid into the shadows of the nearby cabinet used to store cleaning equipment.

"Ku, Kurumi......?"

Shidou knitted his eyebrows in response towards Kurumi's puzzling movements.

Kurumi shyly blushed, opening her small mouth.

"It's okay......you know, if it's Shidou-san."

Saying that, the hands that were holding onto the skirt, slowly rose.

"Eh......eh eh!?

Shidou, in reaction to this totally unexpected turn of events, widened his eyes.

However when Shidou was at a loss as to what to do, Kurumi had already lifted up her skirt. The thighs wrapped by the black tights slowly showed——even that forbidden triangle zone was slightly showing. Through that black fabric that was being stretched on both sides, white panties could be seen in an instant.

"——!!"

Shidou immediately closed his eyes, grabbing Kurumi's skirt and pulling it back to its original position.

"Ara,ara."

Kurumi said while showing an incredulous look.

"What's wrong? If it is Shidou-san......I don't mind, you know?"

"No, that's enough! Now! Let's go already!"

"Ufufu, Shidou-san is shy~ Aaa, but, if we want to continue, can you please let go of my skirt first?"

"......!"

Being reminded of that fact, Shidou's eyes sprung open. ......If it were to be seen from the side, the present Shidou, is undoubtedly a super pervert who brings girls to dark corners to lift their skirts.

"So, sosososososorry......!"

Hastily letting go of his hands. Kurumi let out a snicker with an expression as though she did not mind at all.

"Shidou, don't panic, first adjust your body posture."

At this moment, Kotori's instruction arrived. Shidou unnaturally coughed. As they continued with their route, following the previous instruction and asked.

"A, about that, Kurumi."

"Nn, what is it?"

"In the morning, didn't you say 'I am a Spirit'? What exactly, are Spirits?"

After Shidou's question, Kurumi was stunned for a moment——But very quickly, revealed a slight smile.

"—Ufufu, please don't play dumb, Shidou-san. Don't you know it clearly? The issue, about Spirits."

"............"

Faced with Kurumi's reply, Shidou held his breath.

"What, this girl."

Kotori let out a surprised sound similar to Shidou.

"Confident that Shidou knows about the Spirits......What in the world is going on here?"

Shidou did not require prompting to understand, and asked the question in Kotori's stead.

"Ho, how do you know, the thing about me knowing.....?"

"Fufu, that is——a secret."

"Eh?"

"The reason I came to this school was just to meet with Shidou-san. Because I knew about Shidou-san, that's why I've been longing to see you. There was never a day that I wasn't thinking about Shidou-san. So—right now, I'm extremely happy."

Finishing her words, Kurumi's cheeks were dyed a light pink.

"..................!!"

Shidou felt his cheeks giving off heat. Even though he couldn't see it, his ears would be emitting steam by now.

Why. Why is this. Whether it's flirting or a girl in love, it's totally in a different dimension. This existence known as Kurumi was already too cute to describe—this feeling assailed Shidou.

It was just like in middle school, the feeling was just like getting drunk after licking the whiskey that his father placed in the glass cabinet, a drowsy drunkenness. As though he would crumple to the floor with the slightest touch.

"Hey, isn't the situation reversed like this!"

"Ha......"

Kotori's voice brought Shidou back to his senses.

"Well......let's continue moving."

Shidou deeply breathed in, moving forward while trying to hide from Kurumi's gaze.

The reason was......ever since then as long as they made eye contact, he felt as though he was rooted to the spot.

"......Keh, not going to spill it that easily huh. We have no choice, continue to attack. ——I don't care if it is cowardly anymore. We can't let her take control of the situation."

"Sh, shut it......"

"Well......It is frustrating to be led around by the nose. Let's try to make her waver."

After Kotori finished speaking, the main screen of the bridge displayed multiple choices.

"Kurumi, your hair is really beautiful." Gently stroke her hair as if nothing has happened. "Ah, it's dangerous!" Pretend to trip and fall on her. "Hey, it's this way." Naturally hold her hand.

Umu, Kotori raised the Chupa Chups that was in her mouth.

The choices were all unintentional body contact. It was slightly risky... but it is precisely because her mental state was stable, that resulted in the AI making such decisions. It truly was an effective method to shorten the distance.

"——Everyone, choose!"

After she was done, she immediately glanced at the voting results on the monitor beside her hand, Kotori nodded.

" huh? Well that's the easiest one."

"Well said, seems to be too close, while is too obvious."

At this moment, not knowing when he reappeared beside Kotori, Kannazuki spoke up.

Golden hair in a mess, his chest slightly showing, the western pants that he usually wore was nowhere to be found, replacing that was a pair of tights with characters printed on them.

"Ara, it seems that you escaped safely Kannazuki."

"What a dangerous place. Who exactly are they?"

"To prepare for the situation when they're needed of course."

"Then why did they try to take off my underwear?"

"It's just you."

"What now, was I being overly conscious?"

Kannazuki ended with a "Ha ha ha.", quickly turning serious once more.

"However......Attempting to make bodily contact, there's another method to do so."

"Say it out."

"Ha. First of all, get Shidou-kun to lie on the corridor."

"And then?"

"Then use various angles to observe the Spirit's underwear that is under those tights."

"Are you doing it again?"

Kotori's attempt to snap her fingers once more was stopped by a frantic Kannazuki.

"The, there's more. The Spirit would feel embarrassed from letting her panties be seen right?"

"Umu."

Then of course, she would forcefully step on Shidou-kun who would be lying on the corridor! This way the relationship between master and servant would naturally deepen——"

Following the sound of Kotori's finger snap, the two giants once again reappeared on the bridge, taking Kannazuki with them.

"Wh, why, Commander!"

Ignoring Kannazuki's cries, Kotori took the microphone.

"Shidou, it's , go and hold her hand."

"Understood."

Shidou nodded his head in response to Kotori's instructions. ...... But before the instruction, he felt that he heard the cry of someone who was about to die. He didn't understand why, but it felt as though he could not ask too much about this.

"............"

Shidou forcefully gulped, looking at the road ahead. Turning left at the T-junction would be the staircase of the west building.

What a great opportunity. At that point, the act of holding Kurumi's hand while she intends to continue moving, "Aaah, this way this way" pointing out the correct direction to her replayed itself in his brain countless times.

However——

"Hyii......!?"

Shidou widened his eyes in shock. Just as they were about to reach the T-junction, Kurumi suddenly held Shidou's hand.

"How did this happen——"

Kotori let out a similar, surprised cry.

But the awkwardness that Kotori felt cannot be compared to what Shidou is feeling right now . The palm of his right hand, was being wrapped in soft, slender and somewhat cool fingers, applying minute force in them. An imaginary yet strong pressure. It felt as though his nose would start bleeding if he were to be careless.

"Ku, Kurumi......?"

This however wasn't CG but reality, Shidou turned his head mechanically like a robot, speaking after much difficulty.

"Wh, whwhwhwhwhwhwhat should I do now......?"

Turning his head to look, Kurumi who was holding Shidou's right hand, shyly looked downwards, turning her face to one side.

"As expected......I'm troubling you, aren't I?"

"......!! No, none of......the......sort."

With Shidou's words, Kurumi relaxed her shoulders looking relieved.

"Sure enough, Shidou-san really is gentle."

Ending her sentence, Kurumi bashfully smiled.

"N, no......"

——It feels like, I don't know where to look now. Shidou's eyes swam around. His consciousness started to become muddled. You can't. Kurumi you can't. Kurumi-chan is really an angel. Such thoughts were continuously assaulting his brain.

"——Hey, Shidou-san."

Kurumi's small mouth parted slightly.

"What......is, it?"

"I have a request to ask of Shidou-san. ......Would you please listen?"

A peculiar feeling. As though as long as Kurumi wished for it, he would unconsciously nod his head and agree to it.

"Aa, aah——"

However, in that instant.

"Nuwaaa......!"

"......Ss."

Accompanying the shouts, a clattering noise sounded out from behind them.

Looks like the cleaning equipment cabinet placed in the corridor had fell. The brooms and dustpans were everywhere.

Afterwards, the two students who seemed to be the perpetrators, falling to the ground in a heap.

"To, Tohka......Origami!?"

Shidou couldn't help but shout. That's right, they were undoubtedly Tohka and Origami.

"Ara ara? What are the two of you doing here?"

As Kurumi held Shidou's hand, tilting her head in wonder.

Seeing that scene, Tohka and Origami hastily got to their feet.

"It, it's about that! Even though Shidou wanted to bring Kurumi around school, that......there's still some things that must be done, haven't you heard about it!"

"——Tokisaki Kurumi, touring the school does not require the action of holding hands. Let go right now."

"! Right, that's it!"

Tohka in a rare act of fully agreeing with Origami's words, nodded her head forcefully.

"Ah......"

Once someone had pointed it out, Shidou then realised that his hand was still being held. Hastily trying to let go——However, Kurumi took the chance to add strength into her fingers, making it impossible to let go.

Kurumi took a peek at Shidou before turning to the two, and started to act.

"The truth is I have, contracted a severe case of anemia. Then this gentle Shidou-san held my hand. Please don't blame Shidou-san."

After hearing that, Tohka and Origami turned their sights on Shidou. "Is that so?" was sent along with their gazes.

"Eh, eeeehh......That is, well, um......"

He didn't know why, but he felt that in this situation it would be best for him to continue to hide it from them, Shidou vaguely answered.

And in the next instant, Origami suddenly knelt onto the floor.

"! Origami! What's the matter?"

Shidou had a shock from the sudden turn of events.

"Anemia."

"............"

Shidou's face twitched. Naturally, sweat dripped from his forehead.

"I can't walk by myself."

"..........."

"A gentle person."

"......Oo, oh."

Shidou, under a mysterious pressure, held out his free left hand.

"What's the matter with you two. That's so laughable!"

Tohka stared at Kurumi and Origami, grabbing his two arms——

"——Ha!"

Taking a second look at Shidou's two arms, her expression suddenly changed.

"shi, shidou! I also have anemia!"

"Is that so......?"

"U,umu, to tell you the truth, my butt doesn't have a lot of flesh! "

"No, that's not what anemia is......"

As Shidou bitterly smiled, Tohka held her arms out while looking troubled.

"An, anyway, I want it too!"

Saying that, she tried to hold hands.——But, they were already occupied by Kurumi and Origami.

"Guuuu......."

Tohka showed an expression as though she were about to cry, standing right in front of Shidou, lowering her waist as though she was about to pounce.

"Hey, hey——Don't tell me——"

At this moment, a handphone ringtone sounded out from nowhere.

"——Hello."

Origami took out her handphone from her pocket, starting a conversation.

Although she gave a carefree reply, he did not understand why she shot a sharp glance towards Kurumi.

"......Understood."

With that, she silently ended the phone call.

"Something urgent came up."

After Origami increased her grip on Shidou's hand, she reluctantly let go.

Immediately, Tohka took the opening to grab Shidou's hand tightly.

"............"

Origami took a peek at Tohka, then using a hateful glare, looked at Kurumi and walked off.

Before leaving, she whispered a sentence into Shidou's ear " Beware of Tokisaki Kurumi.".

"Wh, what......?"

"Shidou-san? Aren't we going?"

"Eh? Aa, aaaah......"

Under Kurumi's prompting, Shidou continued walking with his two arms still being held.

......Needless to say, the stares from the surroundings had increased.

Six in the afternoon.

Shidou who brought Kurumi around the school to view the facilities, as well as Tohka who half forcefully forced them to let her follow went out of the school gate, walking on the street that was dyed red by the setting sun. ——Of course, Shidou's arms were already freed.

"Well, that's most of it. Did you get it?"

"Nn, thank you very much. ......Really now, it would have been better if it were only the two of us."

"Ha......haha."

Shidou gave a bitter smile to the joking Kurumi.

Truthfully speaking, Shidou was grateful to Tohka.

With a burden, it made <Ratatoskr>'s instructions much easier, even though they still went to the event spots such as the rooftop and the infirmary, no romantic atmosphere was created.

No, even if he did raise Kurumi's affections for him, there was still reason to worry...... But how to say it, if he and Kurumi were to enter a location with such an atmosphere, it felt like he would be eaten.

Kurumi did indeed possess that special attractiveness.

Just like——that's right, just like a carnivore, or a bug-eating plant.

"No no......"

Shidou shook his head at those thoughts. Describing girls like they were predators or bug-eating plants, even if he didn't say it aloud it was still rude.

——At this moment.

"Well then, Shidou-san, Tohka-san. I'll take my leave from here. "

Nearing the crossroads, Kurumi gave a bow and said.

"Eh? Oo, oh......"

"Mu, is that so? Well see you again tomorrow."

As Shidou and Tohka waved their hands, Kurumi disappeared into the setting sun.

"——Aaah, aaah."

After saying goodbye to Shidou and Tohka, Kurumi said aloud while she walked on the street under the setting sun alone.

"I still can't——slightly, I couldn't bear it. It took so long for me to find it, I still want to enjoy school life for a while longer."

After muttering to herself, her body spun around in a rhythm.

"......Ufufu, this enjoyment, I'll leave it to the last part to enjoy then."

Suddenly——Kurumi who was dancing along the street, bumped into something.

"——"

Putting strength into her legs she managed to stay upright, looking in front. It looked like Kurumi had bumped into a man's back. Men who looked like delinquents, were all gathered at the side of the road.

"Ara ara, I'm really sorry."

Kurumi bowed her head and said, while trying to walk away. However,

"Hey. Wait a second, little lady. It was your fault for being careless, don't think that things would end just like this."

The man who Kurumi bumped into gave a sinister smile.

Just like a response, the man's comrades, separated out and surrounded Kurumi.

"Ara, ara?"

Kurumi tilted her head in wonder, one of the men let out a whistle.

"Hey hey, her looks aren't that bad. A great catch?"

"Hey—hey—, what's your name? I want to be friends with you! " Just like that, the gangsters continued to look at Kurumi all over, speaking and gaggling.

Aaah——At this point, Kurumi understood.

"Onii-san——Don't tell me, you want to go out with me?"

Kurumi said while faintly smiling. The men were stunned for a moment, then started laughing with their hands on their foreheads .

"Hey hey, go out she said. Meanie—. Ec——chi!"

"But isn't this fine. What, you like this type too?" "Nn. To an extent. ——Leaving that aside, how about we change locations? There's too many people here."

Kurumi's words caused a commotion amongst the men, the men entered an alley while surrounding Kurumi.

After forcing Kurumi into a dead end, the man who Kurumi had bumped into showed a lecherous smile and extended his hand .

"Well......then, I won't stand on ceremony now."

But——That extended hand did not touch Kurumi, shifting slightly downwards.

"Ah? What are you doing. If you aren't gonna do it then let me ——"

The man's comrade shrugged his shoulders and said. But the man who reached out for Kurumi, interrupted his words in panic.

"N, no! My body is......!"

"Your body?"

At this moment, his comrades have also noticed.

From Kurumi's feet, her shadow rapidly expanded, and the countless white arms that grew from it——was in the middle of dragging the man's body into the shadow.

"......!? Wh, what is this......!"

"U, uwaaaaaaa......!?" Everyone started to yell.

However, it was already too late.

"Ufufu, fufu."

Kurumi's smile twisted, at the same time everyone's legs were caught by the white arms, their bodies gradually being pulled into the shadows.

"Well, even though they are pieces of trash that's usually not worth eating...... But since I have a main dish waiting in the near future, why not taste a little to get my tongue used to it first—— I'm sorry now."

Kurumi put her hands together with a *Pa!*

Instantly, the moans of the men nearby vanished entirely.

Kurumi closed her eyelids as though she was enjoying a meal, feeling her stomach with a sigh.

——In that instant.

"......Ara?"

Faced with that sudden feeling assailing her, Kurumi's eyebrows twitched.

That feeling of having one's entire body being felt all over. To be swallowed by a giant creature without even chewing, that's probably the feeling right now.

This feeling is not the first time she has felt it.

A barrier that modern magicians employs with the help of a machine called a Realizer• Personal Territory.

Even amongst them this one is special. That's right, can't be mistaken——It's that girl.

"——Tch, one step too late, huh?"

As though to confirm Kurumi's suspicions. A young girl appeared in front of Kurumi's eyes.

Hair tied up in a bunch, a girl that looked like a middle schooler
.

Even though she was wearing casual wear such as a colorful parka jacket and a culotte skirt. The surrounding air, was as dangerous as a ferocious beast who caught sight of its prey.

"Looks like you've been wildly eating again, <Nightmare>."

"Ara ara, you are......Takamiya Mana-san, correct?"

Kurumi slightly slanted her head and said, Mana unhappily let out a *Humph*.

"Even though it is commendable for you to remember my name, that attitude makes me want to puke."

"Ara, I apologise for that then."

Kurumi bowed her head, honestly apologising.

"However, names are very important. I would be very unhappy if I were to be called <Nightmare> and the like. May I ask that you call me Tokisaki Kurumi?"

As Kurumi finished, Mana slanted her eyebrows in irritation.

"Because it's important, that's why I don't wish for my name to be called by you. Exactly because it is important, that's why I do not wish to call you by that name."

"That feels difficult."

"Shut up, Spirit."

Mana's gaze sharpened.

Kurumi's skin, felt a chill.

After saying goodbye to Kurumi, Shidou accompanied Tohka to the supermarket nearby to buy ingredients for dinner.

Right hand laden with heavy plastic bags, they walked on the street that was darker than before.

"Well—It sure was the right day to come today."

Naturally showing a smile. That's right. Today they had entered the supermarket when it was the time to give discounts, buying large amounts of meat with 30% off the normal price.

"shidou! What's for dinner today? Hamburger steak?"

These few weeks Tohka has gotten used to guessing the menu. She happily said in excitement.

"Ah, I vote for hamburger steak as well!"

This moment, Kotori's voice came from the transmitter that was still in transmission.

Shidou, lightly shrugged, the corner of his mouth slightly raised .

"Ah— What should I do. There's still stewed carrots with fish floss and Sanshoku donburi!"

"Mu, muu, even though those aren't bad at all, can't we have hamburger steak?"

"Hold on, what are you saying. Since we got our hands on mixed meat, let's not be stingy and use it all in one go!"

As Tohka said with her eyebrows knitted together, Kotori's voice came from the transmitter at the same time.

In front, the sounds of sports shoes rubbing on asphalt could be heard. Shidou turned his head towards that direction.

"Nn?"

Over there is, with a ponytail and a tear mole as her features, a girl the same age as Kotori, stood there with eyes widened in shock.

Wearing a parka jacket and a culotte skirt. Her white sports shoes, has striking red spots on them for some reason. ......Just like, bloodstains.

"......?"

An unfamiliar face......at least that was how it was supposed to be, Shidou tilted his head.

He doesn't understand why, but there was a slight familiarity......it felt as though they have met somewhere before.

At that moment, Shidou noticed that the girl was staring straight at his direction. Shidou couldn't help but turn his body around. She must have seen something shocking in her line of sight.

However, nothing was there. Aside from the streets the he was used to walking along, the equally spaced telephone poles as well as the garbage disposal marked by nets, there was nothing else that can be seen.

That means, the one that the girl was looking at, could only be Shidou—

Shidou's thoughts stopped at this point.

"Nii"

The girl opened her trembling lips.

"Nii?"

Shidou questioned back. However the girl did not reply, instead running up and jumping into Shidou's chest.

"Wha......"

Just like that using her arms to wrap around his torso, as though she was deeply moved, forcefully hugging him. Even though the victim is Shidou and the culprit was the girl, there was nothing wrong, if their positions were to change a little, they would immediately be noticed by the police. ......No, under this kind of circumstance, it is totally possible that Shidou would be the one caught instead.

However, the thoughts made by Shidou, were interrupted partway.

The girl buried her head into Shidou's chest, saying,

"——Nisama(Nii-sama)......!"

"Ha......Haaa!?"

In that instant, the street as well as the bridge of <Fraxinus>, the voices of the Itsuka siblings beautifully coincided with each other.

Chapter 3: Sisters War

"Ohh, so this is Nii-sama's current home!"

Reaching the door of the Itsuka residence with much difficulty, the girl moved her hair that was slightly shorter than a ponytail, happily saying words that sounds polite and yet not conforming to keigo.

The self-declared Shidou's sister, whose name seemed to be Takamiya Mana.

Although this girl could not be anymore suspicious...... However when hugging Shidou at the street, she sat down on the spot, tears forming in her eyes, passionately describing how she was so hopeful of meeting with Shidou, he had no choice but to bring her along.

Of course, Kotori's approval had been given. To tell the truth——the one to suggest that they should bring Mana to the Itsuka residence, was Kotori herself.

"Mu, but that was really shocking. shidou actually has another sister......"

"No......I don't have that memory at all."

"Really? I still think that she looks similar to shidou......"

"That's goes without saying! Because I'm his sister!"

As Tohka finished, Mana confidently hugged her arms.

However Mana's look suddenly changed, looking at Shidou and Tohka while revealing a complicated expression.

"......But Nii-sama. Mana really has to hand it to you."

"Ha? About what?"

"Of course! Tobiichi——That's not right, that, is, aside from sister-in-law, why are you still mixing around with other females... ..."

Mana cleared her throat, blushing furiously while speaking.

"Ha——Haa?"

Shidou widened his eyes and yelled.

"? Is there anything wrong?"

"There's too many points to tsukkomi on! The first one was what was it? Do you know Origami?"

"Nn, well. Is that strange?"

At the same time Mana spoke, she looked as if she was trying to find an excuse as her eyes looked around. Although he was very concerned about how the two of them knew each other, there was another issue that took priority.

"And then......What's with calling her sister-in-law......?"

"No, it's not like I don't have any reservations with that way of calling, but its to make preparations for the future......"

"There's no such plans for that!?"

"Is, is that so......?"

Mana knitted her brows looking troubled.

"But Nii-sama is a suspect for two-timing......"

"Two-timing. What's that?"

Tohka tilted her head. Looks like she has learned another dangerous word again.

But just as Shidou was about to explain it to her......meaning in the middle of his confusion, Mana had already thrown questions at Tohka.

"I'll be direct. You are Tohka-san right. Are you currently going out with Nii-sama?"

"Wha......!"

Shidou cut in between the two with an extremely red face.

"Wh, what are you saying, how could that be possible!"

Mana gave Tohka a surprised look.

"......Tohka-san? Have you gone on a date with Nii-sama before? "

She removed her head from Shidou's side and asked Tohka this.

"Aaah, I have!"

"..........."

Mana directed a piercing gaze *Ji—* at Shidou.

"Th, that's not it, about that......"

He was not lying, but it was difficult for him to deny it. Shidou took a step back with cold sweat dripping down his back.

At this point, Mana blushed and using a tone of absolute seriousness, asked Tohka another question.

"Tohka-san. Don't tell me, you have already *Chu—*?"

"*Chu—*?"

"I, I'm talking about kissing!"

"Nn, we did?"

"......!!"

At Tohka's calm reply, Mana widened her eyes.

"Im, impure!"

"Hey, calm down......"

"Nii-sama actually did such a gigolo-like act......! That's too heartbreaking! Reform! You must be corrected!"

"shidou, what is a gigolo?"

Tohka once again asked in curiosity. Instead Shidou said " AH—what a pain!" furiously scratching his head, pushing Tohka towards the condominum next door.

"Nu? Why are you pushing me?"

"It's a pain to explain, first of all you should return to your room ."

"Muu, but..."

"I'll make hamburger steak for tonight's dinner will that suffice!"

"Oooh, really!?"

After Shidou's words, Tohka's eyes sparkled, running towards the apartment while waving her hand.

"shidou! I want fried eggs on top of them!"

Shidou replied with "Yes yes.", waving his hand and watched her leave.

"......Looks like you are very used to dealing with the opposite sex."

Mana said with slanted eyes. On the other hand Shidou acted like he didn't hear anything, turning around and entering the gate of the Itsuka residence.

Grabbing the door handle, opening the entrance. And then——

"——Welcome back, O• Nii• Chan!"

Waiting at the entrance was Kotori wearing casual clothing (Of course, the ribbons were still black), what was different was the forceful way she said "Onii-chan".

In order to receive the guest, she returned home from <Fraxinus > and waited.

"Oh, Oo......I'm home."

Shidou perspiring under an unexplainable pressure, raised his hand slightly in reply.

"Ara. Who's this?"

It felt like an old-fashioned way of asking. But this cannot be helped. Kotori who had been at home all this time (Let's just put it like that), yet knowing what happened at the street a while ago would seem extremely suspicious.

"Aa, aaah......We met each other at the street. No matter what—"

"Is there anyone else still inside the house!? Nii-sama has been in your care!"

Mana said with a huge smile, while forcefully holding Kotori's hand and shaking it vigorously.

Kotori in a rare moment, was troubled to the point of perspiring .

"Nii-sama? Shidou is?"

"Yes! My name is Takamiya Mana! Nii-sama's sister."

Kotori sighed through her nose, letting go of Mana's hand and brought her into her house.

"Well, why don't we come in first. We can talk about the details later."

"Yes!"

Mana replied enthusiastically, following behind Kotori.

"......Haaaa"

It felt like it would escalate into a messy situation, but fortunately that was not the case.

Shidou lightly sighed, taking off his shoes and followed the two into the hallway.

Tea and tidbits had already been laid out onto the table, Kotori and Mana faced each other and sat on the sofa.

Kotori used her chin to point to the seat beside Mana. It felt like they were going to enter a three-way conference.

"——Well then. Can we hear it from you?"

"Yes!"

In response to Kotori's words, Mana gave a decisive reply.

"Mana, that's your name right? You......call yourself Shidou's sister?"

"That's the case."

Mana said while nodding vigorously. Kotori tilted the lollipop stick that was in her mouth upwards, as though trying to ascertain Mana's reaction as she continued to speak.

"My name is Itsuka Kotori.——I am also, Shidou's sister."

"......?"

Mana inclined her head to Kotori's words—

"Ha......! If you say that then don't tell me you're, nee-sama......!?"

"I'm not!"

"Aa, my apologies.——Sorry Kotori. As your elder sister I will —"

"Who the hell is your little sister!"

Kotori in commander mode let out a rare yell. Shidou couldn't help but shoot a startled glance, Kotori falsely coughed.

"Yaahaha, but my memories doesn't seem to recall one bit—having a sister."

"Really now......"

Kotori looked troubled as she scratched her head while sighing. Looks like her rhythm had been severely interrupted.

"But......little sister, huh."

Kotori half-closed her eyes and stared at Mana.

Thinking normally, suddenly saying "I am your sister" and the like would be unbelievable. However if it was Shidou, we cannot rule out such a case.

At the very least, Shidou does not have any memories of having another sister aside from Kotori.

However——The truth is Shidou is not born from the Itsuka house.

Abandoned by his mother at a young age, he has been raised as a part of this family.

Therefore Mana's words, cannot be said to be a total lie, even though Shidou does not remember, but the possibility that Mana is Shidou's blood-related sister—cannot be ruled out.

Well, but even Shidou's memories of the past was blurry, the fact that Mana who was even younger at the time was able to recall that is rather suspicious.

"About that......Mana, can I ask a question?"

"Yes! What is it, Nii-sama!"

At Shidou's words, Mana seemed to be truly happy from the depths of her heart, using an exuberant tone to reply. Kotori unhappily let out a "Humph!" for reasons unknown.

"About that......Sorry. But I don't remember anything about you. ....."

"That's to be expected."

Mana folded her arms and nodded.

Shidou gulped, and asked the issue that was on his mind.

"Although I've been wanting to ask this from the start—Your mother......right now is."

If Mana really was Shidou's blood sister——she should know something about it.

The one that abandoned Shidou, his birth mother.

However—,

"Ah?"

Mana tilted her head, giving a vague reply.

Shidou's eyebrows wrinkled——Don't tell me, Mana was also abandoned after Shidou?

At this point, as though seeing through what Shidou was thinking from his expressions, Mana shook her head.

"Ah, it's not that it's not like that. That kind of thing didn't happen—"

Mana bitterly smiled in embarrassment, drinking the red tea beside her in one gulp and continued.

"I——Truthfully speaking do not have any memories from the past."

"......What is this?"

Regarding this, Kotori revealed an expression of utter displeasure. Adjusting her body posture to face Mana, speaking once more.

"If it is the past that you have mentioned, how much exactly did you lose?"

"That's right. I can't remember anything two to three years prior , but I can still recall incidents past that period."

After Kotori's words, Mana took out the silver locket in front of her chest, within it was an extremely discolored photograph. In that photograph, contained the figures of Shidou and Mana when they were still children.

"Is this......me?"

Shidou let out a surprised sound, however——Kotori showed an expression of shock.

"Hold on a minute. In this photo, Shidou should be around ten years old right? At that time, should he have already arrived at our house?"

"Ah, now that you mentioned it that's true."

Scratching his face as he said so. However the boy in the photo looks like Shidou no matter how you look at it, that was the truth.

"Is that so? That's really unbelievable."

"Unbelievable you say......could it be some other person that looks like him? But it is true that they look similar."

"No, there's no mistake about. Nii-sama is Nii-sama."

"......Why can you say it so certainly?"

After Kotori's question, Mana confidently patted her chest.

"This is called, the bonds between siblings!"

"..........."

Kotori shrugged with a speechless expression, letting out a sigh. ......For some reason, it looked as if she was relieved.

However Mana closed her eyelids and continued to speak passionately.

"No, I am surprised myself. I really got a shock. When I saw Nii-sama, my heart could not stop throbbing."

"What's with that. Isn't that love at first sight."

"Ha! Perhaps it really is love at first sight.——Kotori-san, let me have Nii-sama!"

"How can I!"

Kotori reflexively shouted. After which let out an unnatural cough.

"Anyway. It is troubling for you to say that you are his sister with such a weak reason. First of all, Shidou is already part of this family, and now you say you want to take him away——"

"I don't have such an intention to do so you know?"

"Eh?"

In response to Mana's indifferent reply, Kotori widened her eyes.

"For everyone in this family who have accepted Nii-sama as a part of them, I am truly grateful. As long as Nii-sama can live a happy life, Mana would be satisfied."

Saying that, Mana reached over the table, holding Kotori's hand once more

Kotori unhappily bent her mouth into a *へ* shape

"Humph......What's this, you seem to know your stuff."

"Nn.——Even though it was a blurred memory, however I could only remember that Nii-sama went to some place unknown. That time I was really worried, but even more than that, I was more concerned whether Nii-sama was okay.——Therefore, now that I know that Nii-sama is living well, I'm really happy. And he has such a cute foster sister too."

With that, Mana showed a smile. Kotori's face blushed, unhappily shifting her line of sight.

"Wh, what's with you, suddenly saying that kind of thing——"

"Well, of course."

At this point, Mana interrupted Kotori and spoke.

"After all, you can't beat the real sister."

"......"

Instantly, *Pi!*, a sound as though the air just split apart could be heard.

"Hey, hey, Kotori."

Kotori did not seem to hear a single bit of Shidou's words. The muscles on her face twitched, revealing a cramped smile.

"Heeeh......Is that so?"

"Ah, why that's of course. There's nothing that can beat blood ties."

"But, isn't there's a saying that 'a close relative is useless afar compared to a nearby neighbor'."[3B 1]

The instant Kotori finished her words, Mana who has been smiling all this time, her temple twitched for a second.

After an stunned moment, Mana let go of Kotori's hand, resting them onto the table.

"Yahaha,......So what about it? At the very end, he still has to be with his real sister am I wrong? There is the saying that 'your destiny is set when you reach three years old'!"[3B 2]

"......Gu. Heh, heheh. However, even though you two are related , but it is the one who has the longest amount of time spent that has the advantage!"

"No no, in the end you are still an outsider, a real sister means being blood-related. Blood ties are thicker than water! From the start the sister points that both of us have are fundamentally different!"

Mana loudly declared. Sister points. A phrase that was totally unheard of.

However, Kotori did not question that as she let out a rebuttal.

"Blood ties blood ties, what else can you still say? You can talk about a sibling relationship but I have been living as a younger sister for over ten years! Isn't it obvious whose sister points are higher!"

"How laughable! Siblings who have been forcefully separated from young, reuniting once more through space and time! Doesn't it touch your heart! In the face of real obstacles, time and whatnot does not matter at all!"

"Shut up! What about blood ties! A real younger sister can't even marry him!"

"Eh......?"

Shidou's and Mana's voices overlapped. Kotori's cheeks dyed crimson, banging the tabletop as though she was trying to protest.

"An, anyway! Right now the little sister here is me!"

"What's that! It should belong to the real sister here!"

"We, Well why don't we calm down first, the two of you are....."

Shidou attempted to calm the two people down with his face damp with sweat, Kotori and Mana turned towards Shidou with a *Pa!*

"Shidou, what about you!"

"Real sister, foster sister, which faction do you choose!?"

"E, eh eh!?"

Suddenly thrown a question that was out of his expectations, Shidou unleashed a pitiful cry.

"No, it's not about......which faction......"

""..........""

Kotori and Mana stared at Shidou with a *Jii—*. It was obvious at first glance that no matter which side he chooses he would not be let off so easily. At the very least he should try to divert the topic, Shidou thought.

"! That, that's right, Mana."

"Yes?"

Putting his hands together and saying this, Mana tilted her head in question.

"You, said before that you don't have memories of your past right?"

"Nn, that's the case."

"Then, where are you living now? You are not living with your family?"

"Aah......That is......"

At this moment, Mana who was fluent up till now was faltering with her words.

"We, well, there are a lot of reasons for that."

"A lot of reasons?"

"Something......like that. If I have to say it then its because I'm working in a place that is equipped with living quarters."

"Work......? Mana, at this age? Aren't you the same as Kotori? What about school?"

Well even though Kotori is holding the commanding position of a secret organisation......but she still obediently attends school.

Mana's eyes looked around in distress.

"Th, that is......eeh—um......Ex, excuse me!"

"Eh......? Wait, hold on a——"

Mana said. Before Shidou managed to stop her, she ran off and escaped like a rabbit.

"Wh......what's with her, what in the......"

Scratching his face he looked at the entrance where Mana had disappeared in a daze.

At this moment, beside Shidou, Kotori who was seated opposite Mana stood up, keeping the teacup Mana had used for reasons unknown.

The next day. *Kiin Koon Kaan Kooon*, the usual sound of the bell vibrated his eardrums.

The hands of the clock showed the time as 8:30 am, the time for morning homeroom to start. The classmates who were chatting everywhere hustled each other to return to their seats.

"......Aare?"

In the middle of the chaos. Shidou who has returned to his seat beforehand tilted his head slightly.

Even though the bell has already rung, Kurumi still has yet to appear in the classroom.

Tohka seemed to think the same thing, looking around her surroundings.

"Muu, that Kurumi, she's late on the second day of her transfer."

The same time Tohka said that.

"——She won't come."

To Shidou's left, came a calm voice.

Origami didn't turn her head around, using only her eyes to look at Tohka as she spoke.

"Nu? What do you mean?

"It means this. Tokisaki Kurumi, is, no longer going to attend school."

"Eh? That means——"

As Shidou opened his mouth to speak, the classroom door opened with a *kacha*, Tama-chan-sensei entered the classroom with her hands hugging the attendance booklet. Afterwards, the class representative gave the call to greet.

"About that......"

Although he was very concerned about Origami's words, but he could not ignore the call. Shidou and the class sat down after the greeting.

"Okay, good morning everyone, now let's start with the attendance."

Saying that Tama-chan-sensei opened the booklet and started to read out the names of the students.

"Tokisaki-san."

Tama-chan read out Kurumi's name. However, there was no response.

"Aare, Tokisaki-san isn't here? Really now, if she was going to be absent she should have called to inform us beforehand."

Tama-chan puffed her cheeks and turned the page of the attendance booklet.

At that instant.

"——Here."

At the back of the classroom, a familiar voice sounded.

"Kurumi?"

Looking back, Shidou's eyes widened. That's right, the classroom back door had silently opened, standing right there was Kurumi with a warm smile and her hand slightly raised.

"Really now, Tokisaki-san. You're late."

"I'm really sorry. I wasn't feeling well on my way to school."

"Eh? Ar, are you alright? Do you want to go to the infirmary......?"

"No, it's alright now. I've made you worry."

Kurumi gave a bow, walking towards her seat with light footsteps.

"What's with that......Isn't she right here?"

Letting out a sigh, turning to look at Origami who had said those unlucky words.

"Eh......?"

Shidou furrowed his brows in shock.

Origami lightly frowned as she stared at Kurumi.

Although there were no obvious changes in her expressions. But——Shidou knew very clearly for some reason. Right now, Origami is without a doubt very shocked.

"Ori......gami?"

Shidou softly called out her name.

Origami's fingertips trembled slightly, quickly shifting her line of sight away from Kurumi.

"——Alright, then that's all regarding communication issues."

Not long after, Tama-chan-sensei ended homeroom and left the classroom.

At this point, just that instant, the handphone in his pocket let out a refreshing ringtone. Why is it at this time. It would have been confiscated if it were ten seconds earlier.

Looking at the screen. It showed the name of Itsuka Kotori.

"Hello? Kotori?"

"——Nn. Shidou."

"What is it, at this time, it would have been disastrous if you were ten seconds earlier."

"Aare? You should have properly set it to silent mode in school" , isn't that what my excellent brother said before?"

"Guh......"

"Well, forget it. ......Aside from that stuff, Shidou. A terrible situation has happened. To say it conservatively it is the worst situation."

"Did something happen......?"

"Nn. ......It's really giving me a headache. I totally didn't imagine that such a thing can happen in real life."

Faced with such a negative way of speech, Shidou's panic welled up in him. Shidou attempted to force his volume down as he used his hand to cover the handphone as he continued.

"What, exactly happened?

"Nn, the truth is——"

At this point, Shidou's shoulders was poked. Kurumi tilted her head with a puzzled expression.

"What are you doing? Shidou-san?"

"......! Aa, aaah......I got a phone call, could you hold on for a moment?"

As Shidou said that, Kurumi displayed her surprise with exaggerated movements, bowing deeply.

"My apologies. I'm very sorry for interrupting you."

"Aaah......It's alright. Please don't mind."

Shidou said while smiling in distress, once again focusing on the phone conversation.

"——Well then, Kotori? What exactly happened——"

"Hold on for a moment Shidou. Just now......who were you talking to?"

"Eh, who......?"

Faced with Kotori's sudden serious tone of voice, Shidou questioned back.

"Like I said, just now, you were talking to someone beside you right. So I'm asking who is that person. Tohka? Tobiichi Origami? Or is it Tonomachi Hiroto?"

It feels as though Kotori was interrogating a suspect, Shidou unhappily protested.

"Wh, what's with you. You don't have to be so angry. Someone tried to talk to me that's all."

"It's fine, just tell me."

"It's Kurumi."

Following that, Kotori went speechless.

"Kotori? What's wrong."

Shidou asked in confusion.

Kotori spoke with someone at her side for a while before continuing.

"Shidou. Come to the physics lab during lunch break. I have something I want you to see."

"The physics lab......? Why that——"

"Alright already, make sure to come."

"Wha, what the heck is going on......"

As Shidou was left in confusion, he seemed to be complaining as he muttered.

1:20 in the afternoon. The bell declaring the end of the fourth period sounded.

After the students bowed, before the teacher left the classroom, they are already in the midst of preparing for lunch.

Of course, Tohka was no exception. Without speaking, she arranged the tables together with sparkling eyes.

"shidou! It's time for lunch!"

Saying that, she took out her lunchbox from the bento box. At this—Shidou inclined his head.

Usually the table on the left would also be joined over, creating a situation of a union between three tables......However Origami did not move her table over today.

Looking in that direction while puzzled. Origami had a pensive expression, staring at her hand all the while.

"......?"

Even though it is of some concern, but eating lunch or not is Origami's freedom. Shidou was in the midst of taking out his bento box from his bag——when his movements suddenly stopped.

"Ah......That's right."

Speaking of which, he did mention that he would go to the physics lab during lunch break. Although the time wasn't specified ......but that was Kotori. It felt as though some punishment would be waiting if he was to be late.

"Sorry, Tohka. I need to go out for a moment."

"Nu?"

Tohka who had already opened her bento box, looked at him with a lost expression.

"Where are you going? I want to go too!"

"Ah—......"

Shidou scratched his face feeling troubled. If Kotori wants him to go to the physics lab, it must be something related to <Ratatoskr >. It could be something that Tohka should not know about.

"Sorry, I can't bring you today. You start eating first. Okay?"

Shidou said that with his palms together, walking towards the corridor.

"Ah—shidou......"

Tohka's lonely voice sounded from Shidou's back. A strong feeling of guilt grew inside of him. Shidou lightly shook his head, walking towards the corridor.

Just like that he moved within the campus, walking up the stairs, reaching the physics lab after much difficulty.

Shidou knocked on the door, after which, as though it has been waiting for this moment the door opened with a *kacha*.

"—You're slow."

Kotori who was wearing her school uniform, showed her displeased face while pouting her lips.

"That can't be. I came here without eating lunch."

"Forget it, hurry up and come in. Time is precious."

Kotori pointed with her chin as she said so, letting Shidou enter the room.

At this point, Shidou suddenly realized that in front of Kotori's chest the usual visitor's pass was missing. On a closer look, the slippers that she wore were not ones for visitors but the ones belonging to the middle school.

"Don't tell me, you sneaked in here today?"

"That's right. Let alone after class, middle school students won't even be inside high school at this time right!"

"Aahh, that's true."

Shidou nodded his head and agreed, and looked into the physics lab.

In the deepest part of the lab on top of the swivel chair, an expected person has already been seated there——<Ratatoskr>'s Analysis Officer as well as Raizen High School's physics teacher, Murasame Reine.

"——Nn, you've arrived, Shin."

A nickname that has no relation to his name as usual (He got too lazy to correct her), Reine pointed at the seat beside her. She must want him to sit there.

After which Kotori sat down beside him as though trying to surround Shidou. ......Having the same seating arrangement as two months ago when he cleared the galge training. It brought back some unwanted memories.

"......Well then, the thing you wanted me to see is?"

As Shidou finished saying, Kotori showed the monitor placed on the table.

As Reine moved the mouse by her hand, the screen showed an image.

Beautiful girls of multi-colored hair appeared in sequence, on the top of the illustration, it showed the title [Fall in Love•My•Little•Shidou2~Love, is it scary~]"

恋して
マイ・リトル・
2

"A sequel......!?"

"Aaah, wrong one. It's this."

Shidou's body shook in shock, Reine once again manipulated the mouse. The image darkened.

"Ho, hold on a second! What was that just now!"

"You'll grow bald if you harp on the small details, Shidou."

Hafuuu, Kotori sighed as though it were an annoyance.

"Those were not minor details! Are we going to have another galge training!? It's about time you——"

At this moment, Shidou shut his mouth. The screen which had just darkened, showed another image.

——In a narrow alley, for some reason, Kurumi was facing a girl with a ponytail.

"Nn? This is......Mana?"

That's right, the girls that were inside the image, were Kurumi and Mana.

"Yeah, this is yesterday's image.——Look at the surroundings."

"Wha......?"

Shidou frowned. In the corner of the plain-looking residential area, several humans wearing mechanical armor could be identified.

"AS......T?"

Squeezing out his voice while half stunned.

AST, Anti-Spirit Team. Superhumans who don mechanized armor, in order to destroy the dangerous creatures that view the world and humans as their enemies, Spirits. He could not be wrong after encountering them a couple of times prior.

In the image, Shidou's classmate Tobiichi Origami's figure could be seen.

Also, each member was outfitted with heavily exaggerated weapons. Yes——just like when a Spirit materializes during a spacequake.

"Nn. I don't know why, but there was an AST response at the street yesterday. One of our crew members took a camera and proceeded to film the process——I got a shock after confirming it you know?"

"Wh, why would the AST......"

"There's a high chance that it's because of the presence of the Spirit."

Kotori said as though it didn't concern her, Shidou gulped hard.

"But now that you said it......a spacequake didn't occur right? The surrounding citizens did not evacuate, if the Spirit were to rampage——"

"......Well, they must have the confidence that they will kill it before it rampages then."

"......"

In regards to Reine's words, Shidou held his breath.

Right. But why standing over there, is the existence of the girl who claims to be the sister of Shidou, Takamiya Mana.

"Wh, why is Mana?"

The next instant after Shidou spoke. Mana's figure glowed with a faint light, after which a white mechanical armor appeared all over her body.

"Wha......"

It was slightly different in shape from the other AST members, but without a doubt it was using a wiring suit.

As though responding to the opponent, Kurumi spread out her arms, at the same time the shadows at her feet crept up Kurumi's body, forming a dress.

Decorations in her hair, her torso was wearing a bustier, equipped with a dress that had frills and lace. All of that were highlighted with black which reminded people of the dark night, as well as a red sheen just like blood.

And lastly, her hair was tied at an uneven length.

It was just like——the minute and hour hands of a clock.

"Astral, dress......"

Shidou spoke while in a daze.

Astral dress. The Personal Territory that a Spirit possesses. A membrane of divine might which protects the Spirits.

Kurumi raised her right hand above her head. Following that, shadows once again crept up her body, enveloping her right hand.

At this moment, Kurumi's body flew up high into the sky.

"Eh——?"

Unable to comprehend what just happened in the image, Shidou let out a stupid sound.

However in the next instant, Shidou understood.

The equipment on Mana's shoulders let out a bright light, hitting Kurumi's stomach.

——Kurumi's body trembled.

But, why. Instead of saying it was due to fear from terror, it was more like she was letting out a giggle.

After that, she recovered herself after a few seconds.

Kurumi let out a surprise attack as though trying to counterattack, however, before that, Mana's attack pierced through Kurumi's body.

This time, inside the narrow alley, fresh blood was splattered.

After which, Mana's blade of light, cut off Kurumi's head who was lying on the ground motionless facing up.

Not even a chance to attack Mana was given.

Just like that Kurumi's life was taken.

"Guh......"

He couldn't help but turn his head while covering his mouth.

Because of the over realistic scene, the reality of it came after a while. After Mana had completed Kurumi's dissection, Shidou then realized that puking feeling at the back of his throat.

His teeth made *kachi kachi* sounds, even though it wasn't cold , his body couldn't help but tremble.

Having a human——strictly speaking they can't be said to be human, but an existence with an appearance no different from that of a human, killed.

Although it was just an image, but having seen that spectacle. No one could blame Shidou for reacting that way.

——Mana in the screen, turned around as though she had completed a mission. After dispelling the CR-Unit she was wearing, returning to her previous attire.

Shidou frowned. He felt that there was something wrong.

There was no smell, nor feel, just looking at the scene made Shidou feel that way, yet Mana who was the culprit of this incident , did not seem to feel anything from what she just did.

It is fine to feel guilt.

It is okay to be frustrated.

It is alright to despair.

Even so, she did not even feel a shred of accomplishment.

The brutal assignment. To put it in a single sentence——That's right, she has gotten used, to, it.

Repeating such an assignment countless of times, just like that, Mana already did not care anymore.

"This, is......"

Shidou voiced out, after forcing that disgusted feeling back down.

"......It's just like how you saw it. Yesterday, Tokisaki Kurumi was killed by AST's Takamiya Mana. It wasn't from serious injuries nor drowning, just totally, perfectly, without any hesitation behind her actions, her existence was erased."

"But that, is——"

However, Shidou did not manage to continue.

Because just now, he saw it with his own eyes. Kurumi was helplessly murdered——

At this moment, Shidou's shoulders trembled.

He had almost forgot due to the shock from the videotape. There was clearly a contradiction in the video.

"But Kurumi today she, went to school normally......"

As Shidou spoke, Reine and Kotori crossed their arms at the same time.

"......That's correct. We are clueless as well."

"After Shidou mentioned about Kurumi, I was still thinking that an illusion appeared."

Kotori shrugged her shoulders as though making a joke.

However Shidou did not reply to her actions. Thinking furiously, he spoke.

"Under those kind of circumstances......she revived?"

Shidou peeped at the image. At that moment, the AST members were starting to deal with Kurumi's corpse and bloodstains.

Looking at Origami's figure in the video, he finally understood what her reaction meant this morning.

Feeling shocked was natural. The girl who had been killed right in front of her eyes yesterday, has calmly reappeared today.

"What do we do huh.——At present there's nothing we can say. "

"Is that......so?"

The previous images still surfacing constantly in his brain, but his breathing and pulse have recovered more or less. Shidou relaxed his tightly gripped fists on his knees, speaking as such.

At the same time, Kotori adjusted her posture.

"——But we still, have to do something."

Saying that she let go of her arms, using her right index finger to point at Shidou.

"Since Kurumi is still alive, then we must continue the battle. If I remember correctly for Shidou's school, tomorrow is the opening anniversary am I right? By today, you must ask Kurumi out for a date. If you work hard and lucky enough, you maybe able to seal off her power with just one try."

"......Ha?"

Shidou squeezed out words from his throat with his eyes turning to dots.

"N, no, such a thing has already happened——"

"Shut up."

Shidou's protesting voice, was interrupted midway by Kotori.

"It is precisely because such a thing happened, you know. It's just like I've said, Kurumi's power is still unknown. It could possibly, require certain conditions for it to awaken, or, it is only limited to that miraculous situation——It is highly possible that the next time she gets murdered, she could be out for good."

"Uu......"

It was true. Kurumi is safe this time (even though it is weird to say it like this), but she might not be able to revive the next time.

"Like I said, we can't do it if we don't act soon. The fact that Kurumi is still here has been witnessed by Tobiichi Origami. Most likely the news has already been relayed to the AST.——Of course, Takamiya Mana as well."

"......Ss."

Hearing that name, Shidou showed a sorrowful expression.

Remembering the scene just now. Even though they had just met yesterday, but that girl who introduced her self as his own sister, just like that emotionlessly, using experienced methods to murder Kurumi—was unthinkable.

"......Understood. I'll give it a try."

Before Kurumi gets killed again.

Before Mana murders again.

"——Let Kurumi, fall in love."

Although he was carrying a heavy determination, but he felt disgusted for some reason.

After confirming that Shidou left the classroom from the corner of her eyes, Origami slowly stood up.

Although the fact that Shidou did not eat lunch, leaving Yatogami Tohka behind is indeed a cause for concern——However, that aside, there is something that she must do right now.

Passing by Tohka who dejectedly let down her shoulders, walking towards the target's seat.

"——I have something to say."

And then, throwing a cold stare, speaking to the owner of the seat

"It's......Origami-san right. Do you want something from me?"

"Come here."

Origami curtly responded, and walked out of the classroom just like that.

Kurumi used her finger to support her chin and hesitated for a few seconds, but when Origami walked to the corridor, she hurriedly stood up with a panicked face.

"Pl, please hold on. What is it?"

"......"

Origami peeked behind her.

Her eyes showed a figure of a girl trying her best to chase after Origami, moving those slender limbs that looked as if they would break if they were bumped. Truly, she was a cute girl that everyone would try and protect.

However, now that Origami knows her true identity, she only felt displeasure.

Just like that, Origami did not slow down, hurrying towards the rooftop door.

Before, she had also brought Shidou to that location. Normally unfrequented by people, it was a convenient place where one can talk without any intervention.

"Haa......,haa......"

Perhaps it was due to running up the stairs in one go, Kurumi's shoulders heaved, her hand leaning on the handrail.

After tens of seconds later, when her breathing returned to normal, Kurumi voiced out.

"About that......Is anything the matter? I haven't eaten lunch yet.. ...."

Origami faced Kurumi, her expressions not changing as she replied.

"You, why are you still alive?"

"Eh......?"

"——You, should have been dead yesterday."

That's right. Origami yesterday, definitely saw it.

Kurumi who had her four limbs cut off and head smashed by Mana, perfectly killed.

Although she understood Mana's strength, but Ryoko still assembled Origami and the other AST members, to surround the Spirit in case Mana wasn't able to capture it.

"......"

Kurumi's eyebrow twitched.

A few seconds later, using her right eye that wasn't covered, she observed Origami's face.

"——Aah. aah, you. It's you. You were definitely there with Mana-san yesterday."

"......!"

The instant Kurumi ended her sentence, Origami swiftly retreated from her original spot.

There was no reason behind her actions. Just that brain felt that something was off, warning Origami to escape.

"Well! Well! That reaction wasn't bad at all. Splendid. Truly splendid. However."

"——Ss!!"

Origami held her breath. Before she managed to retreat, something grabbed her ankle.

Upon a closer look, Kurumi's shadow had expanded without her noticing——From there, two white arms extended out.

Furthermore, the shadow continued to slowly grow in surface area, climbing onto the walls.

And from there, countless arms grew, restraining Origami's arms and head firmly from behind.

"Ku——"

Although she struggled, but those slender fingers did not let go of Origami's body. Instead, the strength increased, pressing Origami against the wall.

"Kihihi, hihi, it's no use. Even if you struggle it is useless."

Kurumi laughed.

Kurumi wore a twisted smile on her face that could not be imagined a few minutes ago, letting out a laugh that would only cause a deep chill when heard.

"I was in your care yesterday. Did you properly dispose of it? My body, that is."

Kurumi approached Origami as she scratched her hair. Suddenly, the left eye hidden behind the fringe was shown. Pure golden in colour. The pupil did not seem to be the shape of an organ, twelve digits and two hands. That's right——That was, just like a clock.

"Wanting to know about me, and wanting to make solo contact with me, don't you think you are being too careless? And you even took the trouble, to choose a location where people would rarely go to."

"......"

It was just as Kurumi said. In the end was she mistaken by how it ended so quickly yesterday——Or, was she mistaken after seeing Kurumi attend school today. Anyway, Origami had miscalculated. Threatening a Spirit with such words, she was too careless.

"You——, what is your......motive?"

Even though her throat was being held, she still managed to make a sound. After which, the corner of Kurumi's mouth lifted.

"Ufufu, I wanted to attend school, I guess I'm not lying if I said that right? But, even though I said that, the biggest reason has to be——"

After pausing for a moment, Kurumi brought her face closer to a distance where Origami could feel her breath.

"——Shidou-san, right."

"——!!"

Hearing Shidou's name, Origami couldn't help but keep silent.

Seeing that reaction, Kurumi looked extremely happy, her smile widening even further.

"He is excellent you know. He is the best. He really——looks. very. delicious. you. know. Aah, Aah, I'm impatient. I can't wait any longer. I want him. I want his power. In order to obtain him, in order to become one with him, I have arrived at this school."

——A tremor. Origami felt her back was drenched in cold sweat. She totally, did not realize that that a Spirit would be targeting a single person——and furthermore that person is Shidou, it was completely out of her calculations.

However. A question surfaced within Origami in that time.

The phrase that Kurumi mentioned just now. What exactly was [his power]——

"......"

This train of thought, was interrupted by Kurumi.

Kurumi's hand started to move across Origami's body.

"Origami-san. Tobiichi, Origami-san. You are also——extremely , great you know. How wonderful, you look so delicious. Aah, I can't stand it. I can't take it. I want to eat you up right now."

Cheeks reddening, breathing heavily, her left hand moved to the chest, while the right hand played with the skirt.

Saying that, she extended her tongue, leaving a trail of saliva on Origami's face.

"Ku......"

"Aah, aah, but I can't. I mustn't. Even though this would be a waste, but I must save this enjoyment till the last part."

Kurumi exaggeratedly shook her head, leaving a kiss on Origami's neck, stepping away from her body.

"You, I am going to leave until after Shidou-san.——May you become, even more delicious."

With that said, Kurumi turned around, walking down the stairs.

After her figure disappeared, the arms binding Kurumi once again went back into the shadow.

"......Cough, guh."

Origami crouched onto the floor and started to cough.

The expanded shadow along the hallway, as though it was returning to its master, started to shrink in the direction of the corridor.

"Shi, dou——"

Although she doesn't know why, but Kurumi she was, targeting Shidou.

It'd be bad if she didn't inform headquarters about it. No, no matter how you think about it, they would never believe that a Spirit would be targeting an individual.

——If Origami is unable to protect Shidou this time.

Origami grit her teeth, tightly gripping her fist.

"......Muu."

Tohka sat on the chair and looked up to see the clock on top of the blackboard.

Lunch break was almost over.

Stomach letting out a *Gururu* sound. Not eating anything since breakfast, Tohka who is a big eater was already on the verge of collapsing from hunger.

However, she did not open her bento. Although Shidou had told her to start eating......But Tohka felt that it would taste better if Shidou ate with her, so she chose not to eat her bento.

"shidou......"

Students who were playing outside were already slowly making their way back into class. Some impatient ones have already prepared for the next lesson already.

However, there was still no sign of Shidou to be seen.

"Uu......uu......"

Not knowing why, her eyes started to feel hot, and felt that it was getting difficult to breathe through her nose.

Slowly rubbing away her mucus, wiping her eyes. The sleeve of her uniform became damp. ——Just at this moment.

"——Aare? Did something happen Tohka-chan?"

"Why haven't you eaten your lunch?"

"Class is about to start already!"

The female trio entered the classroom and spoke to Tohka, looks like they have eaten lunch outside.

They are girls who treat Tohka rather well. If she remembered correctly their names were Ai, Mai and Mii. Looks like they were so close because their names sounded similar.

"Uwaa! What's the matter Tohka-chan! Don't cry!"

"What what, who did this!?"

"I said the person who did this, step out!!"

The three people surrounded Tohka, speaking in harmony. The shoulders of the male classmates gave a violent tremor.

"No, it's not like that! No one did anything!"

Tohka waved her hands hastily, explaining to the trio.

"Eh eh? Really?"

"Then, why?"

"Pollen allergy? Is it because of pollen allergy?"

Tohka shook her head, her eyes looking at the bento box by her hand.

"shidou he's, still not back yet. ......Also, thinking about how I haven't been able to properly speak with shidou today, just like that, I don't know why, I......"

Once she said it out, huge teardrops started falling from her eyes.

"Aaah! Tohka-chan! It's alright to stop if you don't feel happy!"

"But really now, I don't get Itsuka-kun! How can he let such a cute girl cry!"

"Let's chop off his head and feed it to the pigs!"

The trio shouted out in rage. Tohka once again stopped them in panic.

"No, it's not shidou's fault! It's only, I......"

Tohka tried to rephrase her words with her limited vocabulary, first explaining that it wasn't Shidou's fault, but the reason was that she had become too accustomed to having Shidou by her side.

After hearing that, Ai, Mai and Mii all nodded their heads.

"So for Tohka-chan, as long as you can talk to Itsuka-kun, eat together with him and play together with him, you would be SUPER HAPPY right?"

Ai said. Tohka nodded her head.

"Guu, how innocent. This time it'd be useless even if Itsuka-kun kowtows a hundred times."

Saying that, Mai wiped imaginary tears away as though she were acting. Tohka's eyes widened.

"Just as well, the basement of my house has an iron maiden and a wooden horse[3B 3]."

Mii said with a serious expression, Tohka tilted her head.

The trio looked at Tohka, suddenly slapping their thighs with a "Yosh!"

"I'm giving it my all for Tohka-chan!"

Ai said that, taking out two pieces of paper from her pocket.

"Ah, Ai, that's......!"

"Yes, tickets to the aquarium Tenguu Gojuusou......! Tomorrow's the anniversary of our school's opening right? Tohka-chan, take this, go there with Itsuka-kun tomorrow!"

"Ai! Then that means you and Kashiwada-kun——"

Mai wanted to continue speaking, Ai extended her arm to stop her.

"Don't say anymore! Tohka-chan will feel bad......"

As Ai said that, Mai and Mii grabbed Tohka's shoulders with expressions of holding back their tears.

"Tohka-chan......! Please you must accept this......!"

"Ai! Please take it for Ai's sake......"

"Nu, nuu......?"

Tohka felt that she couldn't ruin the current atmosphere, after hesitating for a while, she innocently took the tickets from Ai. The very next instant, Ai collapsed.

"Tohka-chan......You and Itsuka-kun must reach......happiness......ah."

"Ah, Aiiiiiiiiiiii!"

"Get a hold on yourself! The wound is still shallow!"

"......!?......!?"

Tohka not knowing what is going on, held the ticket and looked left and right.

It felt as though if she accepted it, she would be doing something wrong. Tohka returned the tickets to Ai's hand with teary eyes.

"Fuooooo!"

Ai instantly revived.

"Ai!"

"It's a miracle!"

"Wrong, wrong wrong."

Ai who suddenly calmed down, once again passed the tickets to Tohka's hands.

"You can't return this Tohka-chan. Take this and go invite Itsuka-kun."

"In, invite?"

"Yes. Just say let's go on a date tomorrow."

"......!"

With those words, Tohka's eyes grew wider. A date, that is, referring to an activity where a boy and a girl goes out and play.

——Ah, that's wonderful.

After thinking closely, it felt like she hasn't went out with Shidou on a date recently. Having a date after so long. If it's like that, it would be great.

However, there is still one problem.

"I, I have to invite......him?"

Tohka said while sweating in panic.

"Yeah. Just once, just once. Having the girl ask a guy one once in a while isn't that bad."

"B, but......What if I were to be rejected......"

Tohka looked uneasy as she said so. The trio shrugged their shoulders, sighing with a "Fuu".

"Ok ok. You can't think about being rejected now, although if it fails we would still punish Itsuka-kun by parading him in public, but we are going to impart to you a secret move."

"Secret, secret move......?"

"Right. In short that means playing with a man's lust. If Tohka-chan were to employ such a move, you'd be able to obtain the power to control a country!"

"N, no, I don't need such a thing......"

"Alright alright, first of all......"

Tohka listened to Ai talk about the secret move while nodding her head all the time.

When the last homeroom ended, Shidou immediately rose from his seat, walking towards Kurumi's direction.

At this moment, he could feel the coy gaze of Tohka at his right as well as Origami's demonic, absolute zero stare on his left, he decided to ignore them as he continued moving forward.

"Kurumi, do you have a minute?"

Saying that, he pointed to the direction of the corridor, after which he walked out of the classroom, Kurumi followed closely behind.

After walking to a location without people, he turned to face Kurumi.

"Shidou-san, is something bothering you?"

"Aa, aaah. Sorry for being so sudden......Kurumi you, are you free tomorrow?"

"? Yes, I am."

"About that, if it's possible, can I take you around the area for a walk......?"

"Eh? That's......"

"We, well......To put it simply......that would be a date, I suppose.
"

Instantly, Kurumi's expressions brightened.

"Really?"

"Ah, aah......Is that okay with you?"

"Of course. It would be my honor."

"Really, then......tomorrow at 10:30, I'll meet you in front of the ticket station of Tenguu station."

"Yes, I'll be waiting!"

Kurumi said with all smiles. Shidou returned to the classroom after raising his hand and said "Well then, see you tomorrow.".

At this moment, opening the classroom door, he found Origami standing there.

"......Hyi......!?"

"——What did you say to her?"

Staring at Shidou with sharp gaze, her calm voice sounded out with no intonations.

"No, no, it's nothing."

"Answer me. This is very——"

If I continue to be interrogated like this, I may leak it out by accident. After Shidou made that self-judgment, he went past Origami, walking up to his desk and took his bag.

"I, I have to go first because of something! Tohka! Let's go home !"

"Nu? Uu, umu!"

Saying that, he escaped before the interrogation. Tohka barely managed to react as she chased after Shidou.

"Haa......Haa......"

Running a short while, after confirming that Origami could not catch up did he dare to slow down his footsteps.

"What's with that all of a sudden, shidou!"

"N, no......In short that was, well......something like that, let's go home first."

"Nn, umu......"

Tohka nodded her head still feeling confused.

Although he did feel surprised......Well, there's no need to ask further. Shidou entered the corridor, changed his shoes at the entrance and walked out of school.

On the way back.

"Ab, abababababababout that shidou......!"

Tohka who was always very fluent, voiced out looking slightly panicky.

"Nn? What's the matter, Tohka?"

"Aa, aaah. About that......ah!"

At this point Tohka was flipping through her bag in search of something——For reasons unknown she furtively looked around , looking down while blushing.

"Wh, what's the matter? Did something happen?"

"It's, its nothing......! Let's hurry up and go home!"

Tohka looked around as she forcefully said, seemingly wanting Shidou to lead the way as she slowly followed behind.

"What's with her, that fellow......"

Despite feeling curious about Tohka's peculiar actions, but they continued to keep it this way as they walked home.

Although he wasn't sure why, but on the way back, Tohka still did not show her face.

Not long after, they finally reached the Itsuka residence and the apartment made for Spirits to live in.

"Ooh, then goodbye then. Are you eating dinner at my house tonight?"

At this point, Shidou's greeting with his hand raised as usual——was cut short midway.

The reason was simple, Tohka did not walk towards the apartment, but towards the Itsuka residence.

"Tohka? Aren't you going to change your clothes first?"

"! It's, it's fine, hurry up and open the door already!"

"Haa......Well, whatever you say then."

She still had to go to the Itsuka house for dinner anyway. So there wasn't any problem about coming early. Shidou took out the key from his pocket, opening the door.

"I'm home."

Since the door was locked, it meant that Kotori still have yet to return home, but he said it out of reflex anyway. Taking off his shoes at the entrance and entering the house, just like that he walked to the living room, lightly stretching at the sofa after placing his bag down.

"Nn—......"

At this point, a *kacha* sound could be heard.

Looks like Tohka who had followed behind Shidou had just locked the entrance. Tohka entered the living room with her head still lowered.

"Nn? It's okay if its unlocked? After all Kotori is returning home soon too."

"......"

However Tohka did not make a reply, instead she put down her bag, reached her hand inside, taking out two ticket-like objects.

"shi, shidou, if it's okay with you......that."

After that, she suddenly raised her head as though she just remembered something.

"Th, that's right, I must do it properly huh......"

"Properly......? Do what?"

Just as Shidou was left in confusion, Tohka hastily ran towards the windows of the living room, pulling the thick curtains.

"Hey, hey, Tohka......?"

"Just a moment! Okay, start preparations!"

"Preparations......? Wh, what is......?"

However, Tohka still did not reply.

This time she took out a memo from her bag, placing it on the table.

Then, she placed her hands on her hips with a troubled expression, slowly rolling up her skirt. A technique girls often use to temporarily shorten their skirt. Tohka's healthy thighs gradually showed themselves.

"Hey, hey, Tohka......?"

Unable to understand the reason for Tohka's actions, Shidou frowned while his face was dripping in sweat.

Next Tohka loosened the butterfly knot on her uniform, unbuttoning her shirt from the top. The second......the third......she actually undid four of them. From the gap between the shirt, Tohka's white chest could be glimpsed, Shidou couldn't help but turn his eyes away.

"Wh, what are you doing Tohka!? If you wanted to change then you should do it in your own house——"

"shi, shidou!"

Tohka interrupted Shidou's words, using her mouth to hold the tickets, going on all fours, making the pose of a female leopard. On a side note, her face was as red as a cooked tomato.

"Like, like this......!"

"Wh, whawhawhat are you doing......!? What in the world is this !?"

Shidou spoke in confusion, Tohka looked regretful as she said " It, it doesn't work......!", taking out the ticket from her mouth. ...... Doesn't work or not, he totally did not get a single clue of what she's thinking.

However Tohka looked at the memo on the table once more,

"Oo, okay......!"

She shouted as though trying to raise her own spirits, taking the tickets.

Although, this time she placed the tickets in to her exposed chest——and then "Nn?" tilted her head.

It looked like they wouldn't stay in position. Therefore Tohka slightly bent forward, using her left hand on her chest to make a cleavage and placed the ticket inside, after which she gave Shidou a look.

"Wha......!?"

Feeling like he had just seen something bad, Shidou involuntarily took a step backwards.

"shidou......Ab, about that!"

"Oo, oh......What is it?"

"To, tomorrow......won't you go on a date wit......me?"

"Ha......? Da, date......?"

"Uu, nn......!"

Tohka exaggeratedly nodded, displaying the ticket at her chest.

......This is, that right. Is she asking me to take it from there.

If I don't take the ticket from there, Tohka's actions are probably going to go up another level.

Shidou is also a sophomore in high school, a boy undergoing puberty. It's impossible to say that he was not interested, but he couldn't just say okay just like that.

His face dripping with sweat, trembling hands slowly stretched towards Tohka's chest.

And, taking extreme caution to not touch Tohka's breasts, he took the ticket from her.

"Oo, ooooh!"

Tohka's expressions immediately brightened, correcting her posture.

The next instant, Tohka had adjusted her skirt, covering her chest and taking her bag.

"Tomorrow! We'll meet at ten at the statue Pachi in front of the station! Th, then I'll go and change now!"

Saying that, Tohka ran out of the living room at a speed faster than the eye can see. *Pada Pada* running down the hallway, opening the lock to the entrance and went outside.

"Wh, what was that all about......?"

Shidou dumbly muttered, his eyes fell onto the ticket in her hand. Looks like a ticket to the aquarium. Where did it come from.

Following that, his eyes moved to the memo that Tohka placed onto the table. On it, with cursive writing the words [Tohka-chan's Seduction Plan]. The bottom was written the following.

The pose of a female leopard.

Use your breasts to hold the ticket

If those two doesn't work then push him down.

......Although he wasn't very sure, but looks like it had been very dangerous just now.

"Haaa this is......"

As Shidou was confused, a *kacha* sound could once again be heard from the entrance.

Instantly thinking that Tohka had returned he readied his posture——But it was not. Walking into the living room was, Kotori with black ribbons in her hair.

"I'm home. Nn......?"

Probably finding it suspicious that the room was so dark, Kotori frowned.

"Pulling the curtains when it is still daylight, what kind of dirty things are you doing, Shidou?"

"I, I didn't do anything!"

"Well, whatever works for you. What's that in your hand?"

"Aaah......To tell you the truth, I got it from Tohka......an invitation to a date."

After Shidou said that, Kotori let out a whistle feeling impressed.

"Oh my. An invitation from Tohka. That's a good sign. When is it? We'll provide support."

"Aaah, it's tomorrow......"

"Tomorrow?"

Kotori showed a complicated expression.

"Hold on, if it is tomorrow, aren't you already dating Kurumi?"

"Ah——"

At those words, Shidou remembered. He had forgotten it under the impact that Tohka's seductive poses gave him——That's right, he had agreed to date Kurumi tomorrow.

"Oh crap, can I back out now......?"

After Shidou said that, Kotori sadly shook her head.

"You can't! If you cancelled a date that you've promised, it'll obviously create a massive impact on Tohka's mental state. Her loneliness had been showing an upward trend since this morning."

"I'm, I'm not saying that promises are......"

"Most importantly is how Tohka thinks. ——Well, no way around it. We'll fully send you our support, you have to make sure that both dates succeed."

"Ha——haa?Th, that kind of......"

At this point, just as Shidou wished to continue speaking, the handphone in his pocket started to vibrate.

Looking at the screen, it was from a number that he did not know.

Feeling slightly odd, he answered the phone, from the other end of the phone came a calm voice.

"Hello."

"Nn......? This voice, are you......Origami?"

"Yes."

Origami gave a short reply to acknowledge, a trickle of sweat ran down Shidou's face.

"Aare......? I, did I tell you my handphone number before?"

Origami did not reply, after a moment of silence, she continued to speak.

"Tomorrow is a holiday."

"? Aa, aah......that's right"

"You, can't be left alone."

"Eh......?"

Shidou replied in shock, Origami continued to speak with no changes in her intonation.

"11 in the morning. I'll be waiting at the plaza outside Tenguu station."

"Eh?"

"Date."

"..............................Ha?"

"You definitely must come."

Leaving behind such a line, she ended the phone call.

......In the end, not one of Shidou's questions was answered.

"Who was that?"

"No, it's Origami. I don't know why but she wants......with me......a date."

"Haa......!?"

Kotori raised her eyebrows and shouted

"Speaking of date......It can't possibly be tomorrow right?"

"It, it's just that......impossible."

Kotori used her hand to support her forehead as she sighed heavily.

Chapter 4: Triple Date

"——Got it? You will be meeting with Tohka at 10 in the morning, the location was the aquarium located east of Tenguu city. After that midway you will make up a reason to sneak out. You will be picked up by <Fraxinus> once you're outside. Following that at 10:30 you will meet with Kurumi at the ticketing booth, returning to the plaza outside the station to see Tobiichi Origami. However, at this point Tohka would have been placed aside for 30 minutes, you will need to immediately rectify the situation. The same goes for the rest of the girls, you'll need to reduce the time gap between them and make proper adjustments, you cannot leave each one of them alone for too long. We will take care of the schedule here, Shidou no matter what you do, in order to not let them feel down, you have to persuade them with warm words. Although the priority here was to let Kurumi fall in love with you to the point where you can kiss her, but you must not hurt Tohka's feelings, and it would be troublesome if Tobiichi Origami were to find out. In short——I say, Shidou, are you listening properly?"

"......I, I heard you."

......But whether he properly stored them inside his brain was a totally different issue altogether.

Shidou muttered in his heart, faking a cough as though he was trying to cover it up. He replied to Kotori's voice in the transmitter.

In the end Shidou was unable to reject the invitations of Tohka and Origami, thus forcefully forming a triple date situation.

Originally the date with Kurumi should be placed on the topmost priority, however if he were to go back on his promise, Tohka's mental state would deteriorate significantly, risking the backflow of Spiritual power, and because of the possibility of barging into Tohka's and Kurumi's date, Origami cannot be left alone as well.

And the result.....is this hellish schedule.

"It's useless if you just listen you know. Ingrain it properly into your brain."

"Uu......"

Was he seen through. Sweat dripped down his face.

"Haa......Well whatever. Basically just act accordingly as the situation goes. Are you ready?"

"Aa, aaah......Probably."

After saying that, he took a good look at his clothing. Shidou at present, was wearing a simple attire consisting of a navy blue shirt and beige coloured pants.

Kotori read that [The evaluation that girls give regarding the attire for guys was basically negative]. It was normal to see amateurs fail because of focusing too much here and there, therefore it was okay if the clothes are not of good quality, what's most important was cleanliness.

"Now then, it's almost time. ——Let our battle (Date) begin."

"Oo, oh."

Saying that, Shidou took a deep breath as though trying to suppress his nervousness.

At present, Shidou was standing in front of the dog statue at the east entrance of Tenguu Station.

Although it had an actual name, but due to its similarity with the loyal dog at Shibuya station, the nearby residents call it Pachi with both sarcasm and endearment. [3C 1]

Due to it being placed in front of the station, hence it was the same as Hachi, having the functions of a rendezvous point. Surrounding Shidou, many other people could be seen.

At this point, a familiar voice entered Shidou's eardrums, as though rending apart the crowd.

"shidou!"

Turning his head towards the direction of the sound. Over there was, Tohka who was displaying a smile that was brighter than the sun.

She was not wearing the usual school uniform, but an attire comprising of a thin shirt and hot pants. She looked as though they were tailor-made for her.

"Th, this is......"

Just as Shidou was staring at Tohka in a daze, Reine's voice was heard through the transmitter.

"......Aaah, as expected of Tohka, she looks great no matter what she wears, well let's not ask too many questions. Not bad right?"

"Ye, yeah......"

Shidou dumbly replied. Not bad was an understatement, it was on the level of excellence. His attention was grabbed in an instant.

"shidou?"

"Aa, aaah......Sorry. I was distracted. ......Nn, it suits you. You're very cute, Tohka."

"Wha......"

At Shidou's words, Tohka's face was dyed red.

Flailing her arms wildly and turned around.

"Al, alright already let's go! Hurry up!"

"Wh, what's with you, what's with the rush——"

But at this point, Shidou suddenly clammed up. It was because Tohka who had been walking in front stopped all of a sudden, bumping into her as a result.

"Tohka? What's wrong?"

"Mu, muu......"

Tohka turned her head around with slanted eyebrows as though troubled. Her face still had traces of red.

"shidou, speaking of which, where exactly are we supposed to go......?"

"Eh? Isn't it the aquarium?"

Tohka revealed a troubled expression, looks like she does not know the exact location.

"Haha......Hold on for a second."

Shidou took out the ticket from his wallet, his eyes looking at the map on the opposite side of the ticket.

"Lemme see? Tenguu Gojuusou huh. Nn, then it's just right opposite us."

Saying that, he pointed in the opposite direction that Tohka was walking at. Tohka immediately turned around, closely following behind Shidou. She more or less must be wanting him to lead the way.

At this moment.

"......!?"

Noticing a familiar figure entering his line of sight, Shidou furrowed his brows.

Forcefully stopping himself from turning around, he shifted his vision to the left side.

At the plaza that was separated by a single road. In front of the fountain, it was the figure of Tobiichi Origami.

With an attire consisting of a sweater and a miniskirt, a small bag slung on her shoulder, she maintained an unmoving posture. For people who did not know anything, they probably would think that she was a human-sized model.

The time to meet with Origami was 11am. The current time was 10:05am. It's too early no matter how you look at it.

"Nu? Is something wrong, shidou?"

"No, nothing, nothing at all! Let's hurry up and get a move on!"

It would be bad to stay here and keep looking at Origami. Shidou moved Tohka to his right side as though trying to cover her, turning his face to Tohka's direction and started to walk.

"Ara, just like that. Not letting the girl walk along the road and not letting her out of your sights. Nn, although it's old fashioned, but it was also unexpectedly gratifying in its own unique way."

"I, is that so......"

Shidou bitterly smiled as he softly replied to Kotori. Although it wasn't his intention to do so......Well, but at least the result was still alright.

Origami finally disappeared from his line of sight, at this point, Tohka who was walking beside him spoke.

"Speaking of which, shidou."

"Nn? What's the matter?"

"What exactly is an aquarium?"

"What......Tohka, don't tell me you've never been there before?"

"Don't be mistaken. shidou's the only one that I'll go on a date with.."

"......"

What's going on, my face was getting warm. ......Usually she would answer with "D, don't get me wrong! It's just going to the aquarium right!" or the like.

Clearing his throat as though trying to calm himself down, Shidou spoke.

"If we're talking about the aquarium......Well, it's just a place with a lot of fish."

"What!"

Tohka spoke with wide-open eyes.

"Shioyaki?"

"No no no."

"Then, stir-fried?"

"I told you that you're wrong already!"

"Don't tell me it is, acqua pazza?" [3C 2]

"Haa......?"

"Ha, don't tell me it's steamed?"

"I'm not talking about eating! Besides why are you so knowledgeable in those cooking methods!?"

Although he didn't know where she learnt such knowledge from, but it was to such an extreme extent. Shidou would probably be stumped by her knowledge if it weren't for his expertise in the culinary arts.

"Muuu, am I wrong?"

"Yeah. It's a place to see aquatic creatures swim around."

"Fish......swim......!?"

Tohka frowned with an expression of high alert.

Now that she mentioned it, Tohka had probably never seen fish aside from being gourmet food before.

"Ah—......Well. You'll know once you see it. Let's go then."

"Mu......muuu, th, that's right."

Shidou led Tohka who was nodding, moving forward along the road.

Not long later, the two arrived at their destination Tenguu Gojuusou. Recently completed only last year, it was a hybrid commercial facility that was considered new. Various guesthouses and indoor playgrounds, cinemas and a large scale shopping centre were lined up beside it, just like a mini-sized shopping district. And because it was a new attraction, popularity was very high, one can usually observe a large number of people frequenting the area.

"Ah, there. That's the aquarium."

"shidou."

At this moment, Tohka suddenly held Shidou's hand.

"......!? Toh, Tohka? Wh, whwhwhwhat's the matter......?"

"Mu, we might get lost with so many people around."

"Aaah......yo, you're right."

As Shidou tried to control his rapidly-beating heart, he held Tohka's hand in response, walking into the aquarium together.

Passing the ticket to the personnel, they stepped into the dark interior of the aquarium.

Following that,

"Wh......What is this......!"

At the same time the hand that was being held trembled, Tohka's voice echoed within the aquarium.

The surrounding tourists looked at Shidou and Tohka together.

"To, Tohka. We must be quiet here."

"! Uu, umu......I'm sorry. But Shidou, this is ...... awesome."

Tohka slightly lowered her volume and raised her face.

The interior of the aquarium had a layer of glass, fish species of all shapes and sizes were swimming around. The scale of it was so large even Shidou couldn't help but sigh in admiration. It would be natural for Tohka to be shocked at this scene.

"Ar, are these all fishes......?"

Tohka asked while not looking at the ground as she walked.

"Aaah, that's right. Beautiful right?"

"Uu, umu. It's beautiful......"

Saying that, Tohka let go of Shidou's hand, shuffling up to the front, firmly pressing her hands onto the huge glass wall. In front of her eyes, a large shoal of tiny fish swam by.

Tohka's eyes grew round, tightly following the shoal's movements. Seeing her like this was somehow cute, and Shidou couldn't help but smile.

"shi, shidou, let's go further in and have a look!"

"Haha, okay, then——"

Just at this moment. The earphone in his right ear gave a shrill alarm, Shidou's shoulders involuntarily shook.

"Shidou, it's almost time for you to meet with Kurumi. < Fraxinus> will pick you up, hurry up and go to a secluded area."

"......"

"shidou, you're not coming?"

Probably feeling puzzled at Shidou who suddenly stopped in his footsteps, Tohka inclined her head with a confused expression.

"Ah......About that,"

Shidou's gaze swam about for a moment, after which he slightly bent his body forwards while holding his stomach.

"Ah, it hurrrrrrrrrts......"

"!? Wh, what's the matter shidou!"

"N, no. My stomach is a little......I'm going to the toilet, can you wait a while?"

"Wh......Ar, are you alright......? I, if it really hurts then Kotori should......!"

"N, no need! It's not as serious to that extent so don't worry so much! Okay!?"

"Uu, umu......"

Although Shidou already said it like that, but Tohka was still looking at Shidou with an expression of utmost concern. A strong sense of guilt expanded within his chest.

But if he continues to be indecisive then Kurumi would be left waiting. Shidou walked towards the exit feeling like someone who left an abandoned puppy inside a cardboard box.

"I, I'll try to make it back as soon as possible, go look at the fishes first!"

"Uu, umu, I got it. If you really can't stand it then you must immediately contact Kotori alright......!?"

"Oh, yeah......"

Shidou nodded his head, walking off while holding his stomach .

Walking around the corner, out of Tohka's line of sight, Shidou corrected his posture, breaking into a sprint.

"Well......, You really were waiting."

When Shidou arrived in front of the ticketing booth while still panting heavily, Kurumi was already there.

She was wearing a frock and a long skirt that seems to be of extremely high quality, however because they were all pitch black, it looked as though she was wearing funeral clothing.

"No. I just arrived here myself."

After saying that Kurumi lightly smiled. Shidou readjusted his breathing, facing Kurumi once more.

"Sorry......I was slightly late."

"Ufufu, you don't have to really rush you know."

"N, no, Well......haha."

Shidou smiled as he vaguely explained.

Although he could move around at fast speeds due to < Fraxinus>, but in order to transfer, they had to move to a secluded area without any obstacles. In order to move from the aquarium that was high in human traffic to the entrance of the station, he had to run quite a long distance first.

"——Now then, today's main event is starting. Do a good job."

Kotori said. Shidou tapped his earphone to indicate his acknowledgement.

Today's biggest mission, was to kiss with Kurumi and seal off her Spirit power.

At the same time that he reaffirmed his conviction, Kurumi's lips entered his line of sight, Shidou couldn't help but scratch his cheek.

At that moment, Kurumi gave a deep bow.

"I'm extremely grateful that you invited me today. I'm very happy. ——Then, where shall we go first?"

"Nn......right."

At the same time Shidou spoke, his right ear could hear Kotori's voice saying "Wait a moment".

On <Fraxinus>'s main monitor, multiple choices were displayed .

Have a love love shopping date inside the large shopping mall.

Watch a sweet romance movie together.

Inside the lingerie store, observe her as she tries them out.

"Everyone, choose!"

Saying that, the mini display on Kotori's palm immediately displayed the results.

"Umu......"

The same time Kotori nodded, the voices of the crew members echoed from the bottom of the bridge.

"We must choose here! Inside a dark room, unintentionally overlapping hands! There's no other choice other than this!"

"No no, of course we must choose ! Girls love shopping the most!"

Indeed, it looked as though both choices are feasible. However Kotori scratched her cheek. The largest shopping mall and cinema closest to here......is at Tenguu Gojuusou right were Tohka is. Although it didn't feel as though they would bump into each other , but there's no need to increase uncertain factors.

Then with that, the only option left is......

"If it's , it would obviously cause one to feel grossed out right..... .?"

Kotori ended off with a troubled tone, Reine's voice sounded out from below.

"......No, from the numbers as well as yesterday's reaction, we cannot totally say for certain that she would reject the idea."

"Umu......"

Kotori frowned and nodded. Although the risk was high, but if it works, then it would prove to a large extent that Kurumi likes Shidou to a certain degree. It's just like using litmus paper.

"Shidou, it's . Please bring her to the lingerie store inside the station's building."

"Ooh, understood......That's not right, haa......!?"

From the loudspeaker, Shidou's stupified voice resounded.

"E, eeeeh......Kurumi. Do you have anything you'd like to buy..... .or, see? Fo, for example something to wear......and the like?"

"Do you mean western clothing? Aaah, I do wish to take a look at those."

"We, western clothing you say......How about the ones that you wear inside......"

"Inside......?"

At this point she probably caught on to what he had meant, Kurumi's cheeks slightly reddened.

"N, no, it's indeed strange right! Alright, then let's choose a different——"

Shidou's forehead perspired as he readied himself to leave, just then the hem of his clothes was suddenly forcefully held.

"Eh......?"

Turning to look, Kurumi's eyes were gazing upwards at Shidou.

"Will Shidou-san......choose?"

"Eh!? Aa.....aa, aaah......"

Shidou nodded while feeling troubled, Kurumi showed a shy smile.

"Fufu, well then——please, choose a cute one okay?"

"Eh, ehhhh......Alright."

It was he who first invited her, furthermore she didn't seem to dislike it. Shidou started moving forwards with stiff movements akin to a robot.

"That was surprising. She actually agreed."

"......Hey."

It was your instruction in the first place, Shidou lightly jabbed the earphone.

Just at this moment, the plaza opposite the station entered his sights. In front of the fountain, he could see the figure of Origami whose posture was unchanged since 30 minutes ago.

However one cannot totally say that there was no change at all. It's probably due to the large volume of people, a male trio was talking to Origami in an attempt to pick her up.

But Origami did not move an inch. It was as though she didn't even perceive their existence at all.

At this point, one of the trio, possibly feeling frustrated at being ignored, grabbed Origami's shoulder.

Origami then used graceful movements to twist the man's arm, bringing him to the ground.

It probably hurt a lot, the man groaned with tears in his eyes. However, the man's companions were frozen in fear. Afterwards the surrounding people who heard the commotion started to gather around, in the end even the police arrived, taking the men with them.

Origami then returned to her original position, as though nothing happened at all.

"........."

"Shidou-san, what's the matter?"

Kurumi asked, probably thinking that Shidou who stopped walking with his face dripping with sweat was acting suspicious.

"No......It, it's nothing."

Shidou acted like he didn't see Origami, entering the building near the train station.

After which they arrived at the lingerie store on the third floor by taking the elevator. Although Shidou had came to this building many times, but it was the first time that he entered such a space.

Since the entrance had large amounts of sexy female lingerie lined up. Of course, whether it was the store attendants or the customers, everyone here was female.

When Shidou entered the store, curious glances were shot at him from the surrounding people in an instant. Although he felt better by having Kurumi by his side, but this was not a place that makes him happy.

"Well, how cute! Which one does Shidou-san thinks is good?"

Kurumi immediately found her targets, displaying two sets of underwear. Both sets were adorned with cute designs of exquisite lace, Shidou involuntarily blushed.

"Ye......Well. Then......"

"Shidou, hold on for a moment."

On the monitor of the bridge, another multiple choice window was displayed.

The right one. The flirtatious design with black lace as a foundation.

The left one. A refreshing, pale blue design.

"I prefer the one that reveals some more......" Pointing to the lingerie displayed at the back.

"Everybody, choose!"

Following Kotori's shout, the tabulated results were shown soon after. Although there was a difference of millimetres, but unexpectedly had the most votes.

"Since we're already here we must of course take the offensive! Numbing the target's senses at the start, then when its time to kiss resistance encountered would be a lot less!"

Voices of the crew echoed. Kotori groaned as she supported her chin with her hand.

"Well, since the AI already gave us a third option, then we should try it out to see its value. ——Shidou, its . Choose the lingerie behind Kurumi."

Kotori finished, the Shidou in the image pointed behind Kurumi.

"Is, well. ......Although both of them aren't that bad, but I prefer the one over there......"

Following instructions he pointed behind Kurumi. At this point ——Shidou's cheeks suddenly twitched a few times.

Hanging over there was, made of material that was almost transparent, an extremely dangerous item.

"Does Shidou-san like this kind......?"

"N, no, how do you put it......"

Just as Shidou was in a confused mess, Kurumi placed the lingerie in her hands back to their original positions, taking up the sexy lingerie Shidou pointed at after hesitating for a while.

"No, Kurumi, you don't have to force yourself——"

"No, it is because Shidou specially chose this——Of course I must try it on. Please see if it fits okay......?"

"Eh, that is......oh, yeah......"

Shidou nodded his head, Kurumi entered the fitting room in front of his eyes, drawing up the curtains.

Naturally, it became a situation where Shidou was left by himself inside the store. ......It feels as though the reality of his surroundings have become more intense.

"......"

It feels as though an uncomfortable atmosphere had wrapped itself around his body. At this moment, Shidou's shoulder was prodded by someone.

"Nn......?"

Turning behind with surprise, standing right there were a trio of girls. Although he was stunned for a moment, but he immediately remembered. They were indeed Shidou's classmates, the trio Ai•Mai•Mii.

"Ya—Ya—Itsuka-kun. Why are you at this kind of place? Crossdressing fetish?"

"Speaking of which, weren't you supposed to go to the aquarium with Tohka-chan on a date today?"

"Eh? Don't tell me you went back on your words? You want to die?"

Ai, Mai, Mii spoke up one after another.

"Eh? Ah, no......"

Shidou involuntarily became confused. Although he was curious as to why the female trio knows about the promise between him and Tohka......But that isn't the point right now. If they find out about him being with Kurumi right now, there could be a very dangerous situation in the future.

Probably noticing that Shidou was acting abnormally, the three of them angrily stared at Shidou.

"Eh? Wait, really? I can't believe it. Did you actually reject Tohka-chan's invitation——"

"N, no, it's not like that! I was just about to go there now!"

As Shidou shook his head in a panic, the trio responded with suspicious glances.

"Is that true? If you are lying I won't forgive you. My father is a cadre of a black magic cult. It's possible to cast a curse such as ' Contact with a girl will shorten your lifespan by a year' you know? "

"That's right. Letting Tohka-chan cry is not something that can be easily resolved you know? My mother is an SM Joou-sama, she can instruct you till you can say your thanks in tears you know?"

"If that is true then I'll make you disappear. My uncle has an occupation overseas as a killer. I'll use the 'Kill one for another coupon' I had on my birthday you know?"

"Using a voucher to kill someone! Besides who else are you trying to have killed!?"

Unable to stop himself from shouting, Shidou sighed.

"A, at the very least, as long as you didn't break your promise with Tohka, we would be very relieved——"

At this moment, the fitting room curtains opened.

"How is it......?"

Kurumi rubbed her knees together seemingly embarrassed, wearing lingerie that had a surface area that was seriously lacking for a high school student, even though it was barely able to provide cover, her pearl-white skin was exposed.

"......Hold it, Itsuka-kun?"

In an instant, it felt as though the surrounding temperature plummeted.

"Th, that is, this is......"

At this moment, ——just as Shidou was about to give an excuse, his right ear heard a shrill alarm.

Following that, Kotori's voice could be heard.

"Shidou, it's time. Although I wanted to focus on Kurumi, but if we're late and she comes to find us it'll be troublesome. Go to Tobiichi."

"E, even if you put it that way......"

"Alright already, hurry up and go. ——Ah, don't forget to say ' You're cute' to Kurumi okay?"

"......Un, understood."

Shidou with his mind made up, said "it hurrrrrts......" holding his stomach.

"I'm sorry Kurumi! My stomach isn't feeling very well! I'm going to the toilet so please wait a while! Also that underwear suits you a lot! You look very cute!"

Shidou left after throwing such a line down, behind, Kurumi's face turned red.

However the three people at his surroundings, gave out terrifying growls targeting Shidou's back.

"Hold it right theeeerrrreeeee! Why is Tokisaki here!?"

"And your relationship with her is close enough to pick such a lewd underwear for her? Are you just playing around with Tohka-chan!?"

"I'm really deliberating as to whether to stab you or shoot you to death!"

Shidou escaped while feeling like he was about to cry.

"So, sorry, Origami......I'm slightly, late......!"

Shidou said while heavily panting. Origami expressionlessly stared at Shidou's eyes and replied.

"There's no problem. I just arrived here as well."

Doubt.

......After using a huge amount of effort to suppress the urge to say that. Origami had been here for an hour at least, but it would be suspicious for Shidou to know about that.

"Eh, ehhhh......Where are we going today?"

"Movie."

Shidou's face twitched. If we are talking about the closest cinema here——

"He, hey Origami, where is the cinema......"

"Tenguu Gojuusou."

"......So it really is there!"

Shidou showed an awkward smile, lightly tapping the earpiece.

"Nnn......Yeah. Because there's a possibility of making contact with Tohka, it's not very desirable. Ask for another location and see."

"Ab, about that Origami, if it's okay with you can we change to another location——"

As Shidou was about to continue, Origami handed a ticket to him.

"I'll give this to you first. Don't lose it."

"......Yes."

The initiative was totally taken away from him, and the ticket was already prepared, if he were to reject it again it would seem unnatural.

"Well, there's no other way then. Since the area is large, it should be okay as the facilities that they're going to are different."

"Th, that's true."

Shidou softly said, looking towards Origami.

"Well then, let's go."

Origami nodded. The two of them started to walk.

However Origami suddenly hugged Shidou's elbow, forcefully pressing her body onto his, Shidou couldn't help but freeze up.

"Th, that is......Origami-san......? What are you doing......?"

"Just linking arms."

A quick and simple reply. Realising that saying nothing would work, he started to walk again with his heart beating wildly.

His arm at times would transfer the feeling of something soft at times, and Shidou's eyes started to swim wildly.

Miraculously feeling that time was passing by extremely slowly. Walking along the road that he and Tohka walked on earlier, he relaxed as soon as he reached Tenguu Gojuusou, it felt as though he suddenly aged a year.

Entering their destination, for some reason Origami started to walk towards the aquarium.

"......! Hey, Origami......! Wh, whwhwhwhwhwhere are you going, isn't the cinema supposed to be over here......!?"

Hastily grabbing Origami's elbow, but Origami extended her finger, silently pointing towards the front.

"It's not screening time yet. Let's go and eat lunch first."

"Eh?"

Looking in the direction that Origami pointed to. Beside the aquarium, a restaurant could be spotted.

"Ah, aaah......I see, is that so?"

Shidou gulped in relief.

However, the aquarium where Tohka was at was right under his nose, if it's like that it could be bad for his mental health.

There should be other places where they can eat. Just as Shidou was about to suggest a change of location——he was half forcefully dragged off.

"A, aare......?"

At the same time Shidou was at a loss at what to do, he had already entered the restaurant.

It seems that a table was booked in advance. Origami gave her name, bringing him to the window seat.

It seems that even the food had been ordered beforehand, the waiter left after affirming their order for beverages.

"......"

"......"

After which for a period of time, the two of them sat facing each other, maintaining silence.

"......Say something for goodness sake, Shidou."

"Aa......aaah......"

Shidou scratched his cheek and opened his mouth.

"Hey Origami, why did you want to have a date with me today. .....?"

As Shidou finished, Origami stared into Shidou's eyes.

"I'm not going to let you be by yourself for today."

"Eh......?"

Shidou's eyebrows knitted together. But Origami continued speaking, not minding that.

"After the date, come to my house."

"......!? Wh, why......?"

"Afterwards, I want you to stay for a period of time."

"Eh——eeeehhh!?"

Shidou couldn't help but yell. The surrounding customers seemed to be shocked as well, their eyes turning towards them.

But, Shidou did not have any spare thoughts to pay attention to them.

"Ho, hohohohohohow can this be, that kind of......"

"I'm serious."

"Eh, eeeeeeeeeeeh......?"

Shidou's eyes swam about, speechless. In truth, Origami's eyes were as serious as her words. Meaning to say, what she said earlier was definitely not a joke.

At this moment, the heavens really lent him a helping hand. The waiter brought the food over. Using experienced hands to place the dishes onto the table, he explained the dishes in a short and simple way, leaving after placing the bill onto the table.

"Why don't we eat first, the food will get cold! Okay!?"

When Shidou finished speaking, Origami nodded her head with a look of understanding.

Placing food in his mouth while in confusion. To tell the truth, he could hardly taste anything.

As he was about to finish eating, an alarm sounded in his right ear.

"Shidou, Tohka is feeling very uneasy right now. Come back for now. It's alright since you're troubled right now correct?"

Shidou tapped his earphone to indicate his acknowledgement, after which he stood up.

"Nn, Origami! Sorry, I have to use the washroom for a while!"

Shidou said that, passing by the toilet and walking outside of the restaurant.

Shidou showed his ticket stub, once again entering the aquarium, and subsequently spotted Tohka's figure at a location near the entrance.

Her brows formed an '八' with unease, looking around as though she was trying to find someone.

As to who that someone was, there was no need to think about it. It couldn't be anyone else but Shidou.

"Tohka!"

Shidou walked closer, calling out to her, Tohka's gloomy expression immediately brightened up.

"shidou! Ar, are you alright......?"

"Oh.....oo, how do I put it."

Saying that, Shidou patted his stomach with a "Pa!", Tohka let out a deep sigh as though she was relieved. ......Not knowing why, he felt that his conscience was being overwhelmed by guilt.

At that moment, Tohka's stomach suddenly gave " Guruguruguru"...... a cute sound.

"Nu.....nuuu."

Tohka embarrassedly lowered her head. Shidou gave a bitter smile. She's probably hungry.

Although that was understandable. After all it was already lunch time.

"Tohka, it seems that you can use the ticket stub to enter the aquarium again, do you want to eat something first?"

"Mu......Umu! That's great!"

As Shidou ended his sentence, Tohka vigorously nodded her head.

"Well then what shall we do. Tohka, do you have something that you'd like to eat?"

"Nn, does shidou have anything you'd like to eat?"

"Eh? Me? If you ask me......"

Shidou rubbed his stomach. Because he just ate, his stomach didn't feel hungry at all.

However as Shidou said that, Tohka revealed an uneasy expression once more.

"shidou......do, does your stomach still hurt......? It seems like we have to tell Kotori about this......"

"Uu......"

Although he didn't know why, but he felt that he had to go for another round of lunch again.

"So, sorry, I've kept you waiting......!"

After eating with Tohka, Shidou returned to the building where Kurumi was at, rubbing his full stomach as he spoke.

"No. Aside from that, are you alright?"

Kurumi asked seemingly concerned.

On a side note, in her hand was a bag from the lingerie store.

"Aaah......How do I put it. ——D, don't tell me, you bought that underwear......?"

"Nn.——That's because Shidou-san said that it suited me."

"......"

Shidou felt embarrassed, scratching his cheek.

As though trying to change the subject, he looked at his surroundings. ......Well, although it was weird for Shidou to be looking around inside a lingerie store for females.

"......N, now that you've mentioned it, where did the three girls go......?"

"After Shidou-san went to the washroom, they left."

"Is, is that so......"

Shidou sighed. At least his life seems to have been spared.

"Ah, they left a message for you. That is——'Itsuka-kun, tomorrow, prepare to cry.'"

"............"

Taking back his words. Tomorrow, he's a goner.

At this moment, Kurumi spoke while observing Shidou's expression.

"I say, Shidou-san."

"Nn......? What is it?"

Shidou tilted his head. Kurumi showed an innocent smile, saying a sentence that brought him to despair.

"It's almost time for lunch now isn't it?"

"Fu......that Shidou-san. It was supposed to be an important date, but he seems awfully busy today."

Sitting on the long bench at the park, Kurumi lightly sighed.

The current time was 3:30pm. The total number of times Shidou ran off to the toilet was thirty.

It had been five hours since the date started, but the time that they spent together was only about a third of that.

"——Well, it's fine, I guess."

Kurumi used her palm to support her chin, laughing lightly with a "Fufu.".

That's right. That was only a small issue. Everything was just a process, not a stretch of time.

"After all in the end——He'll still become mine."

Using her index finger to lightly tap her cheek, she hummed a song on a whim.

Closing her eyes, the face of Shidou naturally surfaced in her mind.

It was possible, that this feeling was what humans call love.

From the moment she found out about Shidou, regardless of whether she was sleeping or awake, issues regarding him kept appearing in her mind.

I want to know more about him.

His interests.

His thoughts.

His——flavour.

"——Hehe."

Kurumi's smile deepened, she stood up, and, lightly stretched.

Delusions kept popping up in her head, her body started to feel hot for some reason. As though, she wanted to drink something cold.

Just as well, there was a vending machine nearby. Since Shidou won't be back for some time, it should be fine to leave just for a moment. Kurumi walked through the park with light footsteps.

——At that moment.

"......?"

Kurumi went through the park reaching a quiet alleyway, reaching the vending machine, suddenly her eyebrows twitched.

She was in a good mood, but her ears heard an unpleasant sound.

"............"

Kurumi wordlessly started walking, stopping at a dead end even further inside the alley.

"......Ara ara. What are you all doing here?"

And, spoke while silently half-opening her eyes.

"......Hyi?"

The youths seemed to be frightened by Kurumi's voice, turning around.

Over there were, four people. All of them were carrying guns——But this was Japan. Most likely they're model guns——, facing the depths of the alleyway.

And in the deepest part of that dead end, she saw a shadow slightly quivering. It was a cat. A kitten that was born not long ago , dragging its feet while crying out "Mii—Mii—"

At this point, Kurumi understood. They were probably test-firing their model guns, it was an easy way to relieve stress——Well, it was as she saw it. Kurumi narrowed her eyes.

"......What's the matter. Are you going to threaten us?"

"Hey, what are you going to do about it?"

"Ah......A girl?"

Everyone seemed to notice Kurumi's presence, looking at her together.

"Ah—......We're really sorry, this place is currently occupied. Go over there."

Saying that, they waved their hands as though trying to chase Kurumi away.

However Kurumi took a step forward, revealing a smile full of charm.

"Ara ara. Please don't say that. I have some knowledge about the use of guns you know? May I join in?"

"Aah......?"

One of the youths glared at Kurumi——and raised his eyebrows.

Seems like he finally noticed that a rare beauty was in front of his eyes. As he drew closer to Kurumi, his face showed an intimate look.

"Ah—What's that, you want to join in?"

"Nn. Definitely."

"It can't be helped. Well then, let's——"

"Ufufu, there's no need to trouble.——Aside from that, may we slightly change the rules?"

The youths were puzzled at Kurumi's words.

"Change the rules? What do you mean?"

"It's not anything difficult.——It's just a slight, change of target you know."

A dangerous smile showed up on Kurumi's face.

"Muuu......Where has Shidou gone......"

Tohka frowned, looking left and right.

A sea of people were already moving nearby, but there was no sign of Shidou anywhere.

Although she was concerned for Shidou who kept disappearing , she tried to follow him from behind, but upon entering a secluded building, Shidou's figure abruptly vanished.

That's right, even though it was a rare date, Shidou kept disappearing, so there was not much time spent together.

"Muu......"

Tohka was displeased, but she felt uneasy soon after.

Being with Shidou makes her happy. Just the two of them walking together side by side and chatting already lets her forget her sense of time.

However, no, it was precisely because of that——Once Shidou left, that sensation of loneliness would be felt so strongly by her.

At this moment——probably due to being too deeply in thought, Tohka bumped into the person walking towards her.

"Nuuooo......!"

Falling onto her butt. Tohka stood up while patting her behind.

"So, sorry. I walked too fast."

"It's all right. I wasn't paying enough attention."

Tohka apologized, and that person used a monotonous voice to reply. ......She didn't know why, but it sounded like a voice that she had heard somewhere before.

Raising her eyebrows in surprise and looking up. ......The face that Tohka did not wish to see the most, was right there.

"Tobi......Tobiichi Origami!?"

"......Yatogami Tohka."

At this moment, Origami probably realized the same thing. At the same time Tohka called out, she replied with a bit of annoyance mixed in her voice.

"Why are you in a place like this?"

"Th, that's my line! What are you doing here!"

"I am not obliged to answer your questions."

"Wha——"

Just as she was about to argue back, Tohka changed her mind, now wasn't the time or place to be quarrelling with Origami.

"......Well forget it. I'm very busy right now. I don't have time to spare for you."

"Right. I'm busy as well."

"Hmph. Doing something that cannot be seen by others......"

"I have to find Shidou."

"......What?"

That name that came out of Origami's mouth, made Tohka frown.

"Hold on. shidou is on a date with me, why do you have to butt in?"

"That's nonsense. Today Shidou, is on a date with me."

"Wh, what!? Stop lying!"

"I'm not lying. You on the other hand, should stop it with those unrealistic delusions."

"I, I'm not deluding myself! Today we came to the aquarium together!"

"What kind of Shidou are you talking about, a dog? Or a puppet ?"

"Of course I'm talking about the human shidou!"

"............"

As Tohka finished speaking, Origami showed an expression as though she was pondering on some issue——Before long, she raised her head slightly as though she had noticed something.

"Don't tell me......"

Saying that, she left, leaving Tohka behind.

"S, stop right there! Finish your sentence! What exactly is going on!"

Tohka, on the other hand, chased after Origami's back.

"Haa......, haa, haa......"

Shidou with his body slowly corroded by fatigue, finally arrived at the long bench of the park where he had parted with Kurumi.

Although the distance in between them wasn't very far, but Shidou had been running to-and-fro between Tohka, Kurumi as well as Origami for over thirty rounds. It was almost time for his body to reach its limits.

At this point, Shidou wiped his sweat using his sleeve and frowned.

"Aa,re......?"

"What is the problem, Shidou?"

"Gah......Kurumi isn't here."

That's right, on the long bench, Kurumi's figure was absent.

"Eh? Hold on a minute, surveillance, any idea on Kurumi's whereabouts?"

"Um, the image was cut off midway. There is probably something wrong with the cameras......"

"......Why is this happening?"

——Suddenly, the instant Kotori ended her sentence.

"Commander! There is a faint Spirit wavelength response nearby......!"

All of a sudden, another voice belonging to one of the crew members could be heard inside the microphone.

"Where?"

"In a nearby alley at the east exit of the park! This response is——it can't be wrong, it's Tokisaki Kurumi!"

"......!?"

Shidou raised his head with his shoulders giving a jolt, looking in the direction of the east exit of the park.

"......Hmm. Looks like something happened. Shidou, go take a look?"

"Aa, aaah......!"

Swallowing his ominous words back down his stomach, Shidou started to move through the park at the same time.

Adhering to the instructions by <Fraxinus>, passing by the vending machine, walking into the narrow alley.

And then.

"——Haa?"

The instant he arrived at the destination.

Shidou widened his eyes in a daze, standing there not moving a single muscle.

What he saw was an overwhelming, crimson.

The grey colored walls and floor, were splattered with large amounts of crimson.

At the same time, three twisted looking objects, floated up like small islands.

Faced with this bizarre situation, Shidou was unable to instantaneously grasp what was going on.

No, it didn't take an instant, but many instants, over countless seconds.

When the hypothesis started to form, Shidou's brain began to reject the situation that he had understood.

That's because, it absolutely cannot be understood.

In such a street, in this midst of an ordinary day like this.

——Someone, was dead.

"U——waaaaaaaaaaaaa!?"

At long last, reality finally overtook the brain's rejection.

Shidou let out a howl.

"Shidou! Calm down, Shidou!"

Kotori's voice vibrated his eardrums, but that totally had no meaning at all.

The moment his brain understood the scene before him, the pungent stenches in his surroundings assaulted his nostrils, Shidou involuntarily felt an urge to vomit. In order to resist his heavy lunch from refluxing, he held his hand to his mouth.

"......!Uuu......!"

"——Ara?"

His vision shifted upwards in response to that voice. In the middle of that extremely crimson sea of blood, a black girl stood.

"......Shidou-san. You've arrived already?"

Kurumi who was wearing her astral dress of crimson and black, turned her head towards Shidou's direction and spoke. In her left hand was, from god knows where, an ancient handgun with intricate designs.

At this moment, Shidou realized another thing.

Inside the alley, a man was kneeling on the floor trembling.

A very young male. For some reason on his stomach was, three round circles painted with blood, as though it was a target.

"Hyii——,Hyii——"

The man let out short breaths as though he was on his deathbed , shifting his gaze towards Shidou.

"Hel......, Help,......me! ......This person is......, a monster......!"

"Ara ara."

Kurumi turned her face towards the man once more, and took aim with the gun in her hand.

"Kurumi......, what are, you doin——"

As Shidou squeezed out his voice in a daze, Kurumi started to snicker.

It was not the usual sweet laugh. It was a laugh that would cause one's teeth to chatter and not feel happiness.

"You were already planning to kill something, but you did not think that you would be killed, don't you find it odd? Pointing the muzzle of a gun at a life, isn't it just like this?"

"......, Stop, it......"

As the man raggedly spoke.

Kurumi fired the trigger without any hesitation.

Instantly, a black bullet as though it was a solidified shadow shot out of the muzzle, tracing out a pitch-black trajectory, piercing into the middle of the target drawn on the man's stomach.

"Iguu——"

The man's body twitched. After a while, no sounds were made again.

"100 points, I'd say."

Kurumi let out a brief sigh, throwing away the gun. After that, the gun vanished into Kurumi's shadow.

"I've kept you waiting, Shidou-san. I've let you see such an embarrassing scene."

Kurumi, turned her head towards Shidou's direction.

"——dou! Shidou! Run! Right now!"

Shidou at this point finally realised Kotori's repeated cries through the transmitter. Barely able to stand, he tried to force his trembling legs to escape from the area.

However.

"Ufufu, It's......useless, you know."

"Uwa......!?"

Kurumi's voice sounded out from the rear, at the same time Shidou's legs were suddenly caught, falling down with his back facing the sky. As it was too sudden, his head hit the ground heavily.

"......"

His eyes seeing sparks as a dull pain forced him to involuntarily twist his features in pain, but now wasn't the time to pay attention to such details.

He had to escape——However, something seeming to be binding his right leg, he couldn't even move a muscle.

White hands stretched out from within Kurumi's shadow, forcefully grabbing onto Shidou's leg.

"Wh, what......is this......!"

Shidou flipped his body, hastily trying to get rid of his restraints . However his legs were being held with such force that was impossible to imagine, there was no way he could escape.

At the same time all of this was being done, Kurumi slowly moved closer to Shidou's front.

"Fufu, I've caught you."

Saying that she gave a slight smile, squatting down, moving closer as though she wanted to push Shidou down.

"......"

His heart felt painful as though it was being squeezed. But, that was not due to Kurumi's beauty and her daring actions——It was purely due to, fear.

That's right. Shidou currently——is in fear of Kurumi, in fear of Spirits.

The calamity that kills the world. The natural enemy of humans.

Phrases that had been repeated a few times before.

Lines that Origami had been repeating to the point of nausea.

But, these first experiences accompanied by the smell surrounding his body, invaded Shidou's brain.

"——Aah, aah, what a failure. I should have finished them off earlier.——I was still thinking of enjoying my date with Shidou-san a bit longer."

Kurumi used her two hands to hold Shidou's cheeks,

"......, ..."

I want to run. I want to shout.

But, that's impossible. His legs had already cramped up, his throat letting out ragged breaths.

Kurumi moved closer to Shidou's cheek.

However, instead of saying that she attempted a kiss, it was better to say that she was about to bite his throat——

"......Eh......?"

At this moment. Just at this point, Shidou's throat finally squeezed out a sound.

The instant Kurumi's lips was about to make contact with Shidou, a strange feeling enveloped his body.

A feeling that he never felt before. It was as though the air surrounding Shidou turned into a fluid of extremely high viscosity , feeling as though having a mind of its own, a strange feeling.

After that, in the next instant.

"——Sss."

Following a short breath, Kurumi's body was lightly blown off backwards.

That slender body hit the concrete wall, causing the wall to have tiny cracks appear.

"Wha——"

Shidou could not understand what happened, widening his eyes in a daze. What in the world, just then——

"——Are you alright, Nii-sama?"

Such a voice vibrated Shidou's eardrums who was currently in the process of thinking.

"Haa......?"

Shidou raised his head while making a stupid sound.

Not knowing when she arrived, Mana who was wearing her CR-Unit, stood there with her back towards Shidou as though she was protecting him. The equipment on her shoulders were like shields, as well as wings. It was the equipment that Shidou saw in the video yesterday.

"Ma, na......"

Shidou used a hoarse voice to call out that name, at the same time Mana turned towards Shidou, nodding her head replying " Yes."

"That was a close one. Did anything serious happen to you?"

"Aa, aaah......"

Dazedly making out a sound. At this moment, Mana probably misunderstood his reaction, looking at her outfit, scratched the back of her head with unease.

"Aaah......you were frightened weren't you. How should I put this, there is a long story behind this."

At this point, sounds of concrete fragments hitting the ground came from the front.

"......, Well, we'll talk about this later."

The same time Mana ended her sentence, Kurumi slowly stood up, opening her mouth to speak.

"Ara ara......to interrupt the date between Shidou-san and I, isn't that downright rude of you?"

"You're noisy. What about you, who has your eyes on my Nii-sama?"

"Mana-san and Shidou-san are siblings?"

"——Hmph, that has nothing to do with you."

Mana left behind such a line, slightly turning her head. In response to that, the equipment on her shoulders started to morph at the tips, the front parts splitting into five parts just like a human hand.

Next, a greenish white glow emitted from the tips of those ten parts.

"Let's hurry up and settle this, <Nightmare>."

Following her sentence Mana snapped her fingers. The mechanical parts on her shoulders started to give off imbalanced light, reaching out towards Kurumi.

It was something that happened for only an instant. However Kurumi twisted her body, gracefully evading the beams of light.

"Ufufu, that was dangerous."

"——Tch."

Mana softly clicked her tongue, slightly moving her fingers.

Following that, the beams of light that Kurumi had evaded suddenly changed their trajectory, once again turning for Kurumi.

"Gyu……"

Looks like she wasn't able to dodge this time. Her two legs and stomach were pierced through by light, Kurumi let out a strange cry of pain, falling down on the spot. Crimson blood started to spread out slowly onto the ground.

"......"

Faced with such a brutal sight, Shidou couldn't help but tightly lock his brows.

"That sure was easy, for a monster."

However Mana's expressions did not change, lightly raising her right hand. Subsequently, the parts that look like a hand once again changed to the shape which resembled a shield, a huge blade of light emerged from its tip.

"——"

Shidou held his breath.

He recognized that shape. In the video, it was the sword that Mana used to stab Kurumi to death with.

"Ma, na......!"

Shidou couldn't help but cry out.

"Is there a problem? I'll get rid of her in a second, so please wait a while."

"No......don't do it! Something like murdering is——!"

Shidou said that while Mana widened her eyes as though she had heard something unbelievable.

However she quickly closed her eyelids, shaking her head.

"......That means that this girl used a human identity to transfer herself into Nii-sama's class. ——Nii-sama. Although I can't tell you the specifics, but it is best that you forget about this girl. This girl is not human. She is an existence that cannot be allowed to live ."

Saying that, she started to walk towards Kurumi who was lying on the ground.

"......! That's not the problem here! Stop! Don't do it......!"

As Shidou pleaded, Kurumi let out short breaths from her throat, at the same time saying in a weak voice.

"......Fu, fu......Really now, Shidou-san, is really, gentle......huh."

——Mana's sword, swung down towards Kurumi.

Shuu, after that disturbing sound, Kurumi did not move again.

"Huu."

Mana lightly waved her right hand, following that action the equipment in her hands returned to their original positions on her shoulders.

"Wh......y?"

Shidou looked at Mana's back, letting out a trembling voice.

Mana softly sighed, turning towards Shidou, walking up to him . At the same time, the combat equipment equipped on her body let out a faint glow, and in an instant, turned back into normal attire.

"The death of someone whom you know is shocking, but Nii-sama, if that girl doesn't die, the one that would die could very well be you, Nii-sama."

"......"

As Mana finished her sentence, Shidou could not talk back.

"Although saying this may be a bit rude, but please believe that whatever happened today was a nightmare and forget it entirely. There is no value in feeling hurt over the death of that girl. The death of that person is a must, she is a thing that does not possess any value for existing."

Faced with Mana's words, Shidou couldn't help but tightly grip his fist.

"I know the AST's position......! I also know that I have to feel grateful for being saved by someone! But......But, to call Spirits that is......"

Mana frowned in surprise.

"Nii-sama, how did you know about this?"

"......"

Shidou's eyebrows twitched. Now that she mentioned it, Mana didn't know that he knows about the Spirits and the AST.

However after a few seconds, Mana hugged her elbows as though realizing something.

"......That, should be Master Sergeant Tobiichi's doing. After all that one......pays a lot of attention to Nii-sama."

Mana let out a sigh of helplessness, once again focusing on Shidou.

"Well forget it, it becomes a lot easier with that. Although I don't know how you knew, but, that's how it is."

Mana said without a tinge of regret.

Shidou looked at Mana, feeling an unknown fear for no reason.

"Why......are you able to be so calm. You, just, did that......to a person."

He was probably hesitating to say these kind of words, his throat felt painful. But, he still managed to force them out.

"You just——murdered someone......didn't you......!"

"Not a human. A Spirit."

"Even so......! Why are you still so calm——"

"Because I got used to it."

"......"

When Mana said that, her voice was extremely cold, Shidou couldn't help but hold his breath.

"<Nightmare>——Tokisaki Kurumi, even among the Spirits she is considered special."

"Special?"

Mana replied "Nnn." while nodding her head.

"She, is , unkillable, you know. No matter how many times you kill, no matter what method used to kill. That girl, will still be alright, certain to appear from some place, once again killing people."

"......!? Wh, what, that kind of......"

As Shidou said that——he suddenly realized the meaning behind that explanation. That was the same as what Shidou saw in the video yesterday.

"It's just like what I have just said. If you want a more detailed explanation I would be very troubled as well."

Mana softly sighed, lifting up her chin.

That expression, its just like she had aged, looking extremely tired.

"——Therefore. I will continue to kill. To that girl. To < Nightmare>. To Tokisaki Kurumi. I will continue to kill her, no matter how many, how many, how many times it may take."

Mana continued with fatigue mixed into her voice. Shidou's expression became distorted.

"That's not right......!"

"Eh?"

"That——It's not about getting used to it. Your heart......would only wither away!"

As Shidou finished his words, Mana frowned slightly.

"What......are you saying, Nii-sama?"

"That's enough, stop it, Mana......you are my sister right......? Then just once is fine. Please do as I tell you......"

Shidou squeezed out his voice from his throat as though he was praying.

That was not a delusion. A heart that was burdened would constantly be whittled down——and if that continued, till the point where it was irreparable, the heart would then break down.

——When Shidou was abandoned by his mother, he almost became like that.

——When Tohka had the hostility and killing intent of humans directed towards her, she too almost became the same.

"......Forgive me for not being able to oblige, Nii-sama."

However Mana replied, with sarcasm directed towards herself.

"As long as <Nightmare> continues to revive and slaughter humans, I have to take that girl's head. If not, that girl will continue to murder even more people. ——Other than myself, no one is able to do such a thing."

"............"

——You're wrong. ......A solution, there is not only just that one.

However, before Shidou could say this from his mouth, Mana turned her face towards the top right hand side.

"——Nn, Nii-sama. That's all for today."

"Wh......There's a lot more I have to say."

"Reinforcements are rushing here. If Nii-sama were to continue to stay here things will get troublesome."

Mana half forced Shidou to turn around, pushing him from behind.

"Mana, you——"

"Still not listening aren't you."

Mana bitterly smiled as she raised her finger, Shidou's body floated into the sky.

"What——This is......"

That's right. That was the personal territory made by the AST's Realizer Unit.

Mana had expanded her territory, without deploying her CR-Unit.

"Let's meet again. This time, time wasn't on our side."

"Wai——"

Shidou's body flew out of the alley while he was in the midst of talking——landing softly on the ground.

"......"

It doesn't matter if the AST members were arriving. Shidou swiftly returned into the alley.

However, it was impossible. The alley's entrance had an invisible wall expanded, it was impossible to continue moving forward anymore. It must be Mana's doing.

"......Tch——"

Shidou knelt on the ground, hitting the ground with enough force to cause his fists to bleed.

"......Aah"

Mana who had just moved Shidou outside the alley, was combing her messed-up hair.

It felt like she had said a lot of unnecessary things.

But......why, because she wanted Shidou to listen.

"Things like this, it's just supposed to be my job."

Looking at <Nightmare>'s corpse lying pitifully in the alley——the corpse of Tokisaki Kurumi.

At this moment......out from nowhere a small kitten appeared dragging its hind leg, moving closer to Kurumi's corpse.

Feeling intrigued, Mana crouched down and petted its head. The kitten gave out a weak "Nya".

"Hey, staying in a place like this you'll get dirtied by the blood you know."

Saying that, she picked up the kitten. After which she looked at Kurumi's corpse once more.

"......Why, huh."

Her mouth repeated Shidou's words.

Now that he mentioned it, why——did Mana want to endlessly pursue and kill Kurumi.

Kurumi was the most brutal Spirit that killed people, and Mana had excellent potential in operating the CR-Unit. That's why Mana stepped up to use her power to bring happiness to people, that should......probably......be, the, case.

"......"

Because of the sudden pain in her brain, her expressions contorted. Due to her memories being foggy, she couldn't recall it properly.

Lightly shaking her head, as though trying to shake off the pain. Just then——

"Nn......?"

Mana spotted something strange on the floor. It was near the place where Shidou was attacked by Kurumi, something like a small machine had fallen out.

Mana deftly picked it up, scrutinizing it.

"This is, a transmitter......right?"

That's correct, that was just like a small transmitter that one would use in their ear.

"Why would this kind of thing......"

Mana inclined her head, unconsciously bringing her right ear close. And then,

"——Shidou! Answer me, Shidou! <Fraxinus> will pick you up! Hurry up and move to another location!"

"............?"

From the transmitter, a familiar voice calling out for Mana's brother could be heard.

Shidou shakily walked to the long bench at the park, weakly sitting down.

"............"

In his head, the scene that he just saw kept replaying itself.

Kurumi she, had killed humans, Mana she, had killed Kurumi.

Shidou understood from inside his heart. Tohka and Origami——to put it extremely had the same kind of relationship as well.

However Tohka did not do this on purpose and Origami did not have the ability to eliminate Spirits.

Although in these two months Tohka had already gotten used to the human world, but Shidou still could not relax.

It was just a thought, but if the balance were to break down, the probability of the re-enactment of a scene like just now was possible.

Tohka who had an intent to kill and Origami who had the power to kill Spirits.

Kurumi and Mana——they're just like, the worst case scenarios of Tohka and Origami.

"What's with this......This kind of thing......"

Totally, unable to comprehend.

Why, would Kurumi kill humans so easily.

Why, would Mana kill Kurumi so easily.

He was too naive. Even though he said that it was dangerous, but he still thought deep down that "Spirits must all be good people just like Tohka and Yoshino" . In the end, he had the arrogant conception that the AST was unable to kill the Spirits......

Afterwards......

"shidou!"

A familiar voice called out, Shidou hastily raised his head.

Tohka was running in Shidou's direction. It must be because Shidou did not come back so she went looking for him. Behind her , Origami's figure could be seen. It looks like they had met along the way.

"shidou, where have you been!"

"——What, exactly is this?"

Tohka and Origami who arrived in front of Shidou, directed voices of displeasure at him.

But, the present Shidou, did not have any reason to make excuses anymore.

"......Sorry."

An apology was squeezed from his throat, before once again descending into silence.

"......shidou?"

"Is something wrong?"

Probably finding it strange, Tohka and Origami peeked at Shidou's expression with concerned looks.

"! Shidou! You weren't hurt were you?"

At this moment, Tohka pulled Shidou's hand.

Because of the sudden impact of the events it had completely slipped his mind, but there was a scrape on his palm. It probably happened when his right leg was caught and he fell down.

However, the instant his hand was touched by Tohka, the scene of Kurumi dyed in blood flashed inside his head——

"Hyi......"

His throat let out a sound as though it was difficult to breathe as he batted away Tohka's hand.

"Eh......ah, shidou......?"

Tohka dazedly looked at her hand and Shidou's in turn, looking at him.

"S, sorry......did I hurt you?"

"......, I'm......sorry."

Shidou slightly dipped his head, using his trembling hand to grab his other hand.

Tohka was obviously worried for him, and was rejected by him like that, he felt like crying.

"Sorry......I really am, sorry."

"Yo, you don't have to take it to heart. Just tell us what exactly happened......?"

"......I'm sorry......"

Throwing behind such a line Shidou stood up and ran away from there.

"shi, shidou!?"

"Where are you goi——"

Tohka and Origami's voices could be heard from the back. However Shidou did not stop his feet.

The two of them, did not chase after him.

After which——after running for some time.

When he ran to a street without any people, Shidou was suddenly surrounded by a strange floating sensation.

"......,This is——"

He just remembered. It was <Fraxinus>'s transfer system.

Just as he had anticipated, in an instant what Shidou saw was transformed from a secluded corner of the park into the interior of <Fraxinus>.

"——It's good to know that you're okay."

At this moment, a voice sounded out behind Shidou. Kotori who had a maroon military uniform on her shoulders, was standing there with a complicated expression.

"......Kotori."

"You finally arrived at the transfer point. I shouted at you so many times."

As Kotori finished Shidou reached for his right ear, his eyes widening.

"......The communicator, it's gone."

That's right, the communicator that was in his ear throughout the mission was not there. It seems to have dropped somewhere. ... ...However he did not realize it till now.

"Did it fall out? Since when?"

"......Sorry, I'm not too sure myself."

After Shidou answered, Kotori gave a slight nod and used her hand to support her chin.

"......If you think about it closely, it should be that time when Kurumi attacked right......? Then that voice just now——"

"Did something happen......?"

Shidou asked, but Kotori lightly sighed and shook her head.

"It's nothing.——Aside from that, your wounds have to be treated. Hurry up and go."

"......, Aaah......but, Tohka and Origami——"

"If its Tohka, <Fraxinus> will pick her up, and give her a simple run through of what just happened. As for Tobiichi Origami——Well, she'll be fine if you left her alone. Just properly compensate her tomorrow at school."

"Is that, so......"

Shidou weakly replied, following behind Kotori.

"......Hey."

Midway, Shidou opened his mouth while behind Kotori.

"What is it?"

"I——We've been doing all this, is this really correct......?"

Inside the corridor, Kotori's footsteps stopped, turning to look at Shidou.

"What's that, supposed to mean?"

"......I am, because I am unable to forgive the Spirits'......inability to consciously control the existence of spacequakes, getting attacked by humans for no reason at all, that's the reason why I am helping you guys."

"......Nn, that's right."

"But......Kurumi she, to someone——"

She, murdered someone. Not by a spacequake, but using her own two hands. Using her own will.

Faced with that he was unable to not feel miserable and fearful.

"What are you talking about?"

"In my opinion, that is......impossible......"

Shidou——finally blurted out that sentence.

"It has been smooth sailing up till now, but that's because Tohka and Yoshino are good people...... In the end......I, didn't really do anyt——"

At this point, Shidou's words stopped. ——More accurately, they have been forcibly stopped.

Kotori grabbed Shidou's collar, and magnificently gave him a slap.

"Eh, ah......"

"......Don't say such useless words that easily......"

Shidou was stunned, Kotori said with a bitter expression. Or, it could possibly be an expression that was on the brink of tears——Shidou, at present could not make out the difference.

"In my opinion? Impossible......? Hmph, don't complain because of something of that level! You really aren't as resolute as before......!?"

"What's that, that kind of——"

He totally could not understand Kotori's words, Shidou held his face and asked.

However Kotori did not reply, grabbing Shidou's chest and continuing.

"You......, aren't you able to bravely face the Spirits that are even more terrifying! Save them to prove it to me! Don't say that you can't do it so easily! If you were to give up now, Kurumi will kill even more people. Mana will still do that to Kurumi——and her heart will continue to wither......! ......Except for you——there's no one else that can stop that......"

"......——"

As Kotori finished, Shidou forcefully swallowed his saliva.

The "Spirits that are even more terrifying" that Kotori mentioned, was not referring to Tohka and Yoshino, that fact he knew very well——but the latter half of her words, sunk themselves deeply into his mind.

That's right. The Kurumi that will slaughter humans even though she's unkillable, and Mana who continues to kill Kurumi.

Mana did say. Ever since a long time ago, that had been repeating itself.

And that would most likely......continue in a cycle. So long as Kurumi, still possessed her Spiritual power.

And, the only one that could seal off that Spiritual power, was none other than Shidou.

"......"

Shidou wordlessly held his forehead.

I definitely, don't wish for Kurumi to continue to slaughter humans anymore.

And——I also do not wish for Mana to continue to kill Kurumi anymore.

Those were true. Shidou's true feelings. And the method to achieve such an outcome——had already been clear from the start.

"......That's right"

Saying that, he shakily started walking forward.

"Ah, wait......!"

Following that, Kotori chased after him with a panicked expression.

"......In order to stop Kurumi from killing even more people, there's no other choice but to seal her power. In order to stop Mana from killing Kurumi again......There's no one that can do it but me. I know. Are you satisfied"

"............Nn."

Not knowing why, Kotori's voice had a bit of uncertainty mixed into them.

That night. Shidou was lying horizontally on the living room sofa while pondering.

"............"

Raising his head to stare at the fluorescent light installed into the ceiling, he gave out a long sigh.

Tomorrow, Kurumi will come to school again.

When that happens, the mission would continue.

To make Kurumi's feelings for him increase, then kiss her, thus sealing her power.

And then, everything would be solved.

Kurumi will not kill people again, and then naturally, Mana will stop killing Kurumi as well.

What Shidou had hoped for, the only method that can lead to a happy ending for everyone. There's only one.——Just, one.

"............"

As though he had carried something heavy, his entire body felt heavy. Shidou breathed out from his lungs depressingly.

At this moment, in the direction of the corridor, came the sound of the entrance being opened.

"Nn......?"

Shidou wearily rose, looking in the direction of the living room entrance.

If someone entered without the doorbell or the voice system sounding......it should be Kotori. However Kotori did mention today that due to work she had to temporarily stay onboard the airship . If that's the case——then who was it?

Shidou opened the door with that kind of mentality, Tohka timidly walked in.

"Tohka......?"

"......Nn. May I come in?

There's a wrong sequence of events just by entering the room before saying this——However we can disregard the small details for now.

"Oo, oh, sure."

Tohka lightly nodded as she entered the living room, walking towards Shidou's direction.

"shidou. ......is it okay to touch you?"

Tohka who walked up to Shidou's side raised such a question. Perhaps she was still affected by the incident where Shidou batted her hand away in the park.

"Aa......aaah, it's fine."

As Shidou finished talking, Tohka climbed onto the sofa, moving between the sofa and Shidou.

"What are you doing......?"

"It's alright, stop talking for a while."

Saying that, Tohka wrapped her arms around Shidou's body, hugging him tightly from the back.

"Toh, Tohka? Wh, what are you......"

Feeling that soft sensation on his back, Shidou asked while perspiring.

"......Nn. The television did say, that when one is lonely or afraid , it would be fine if I did this."

"......Then let me ask you, what show was it exactly?"

"'Being with Okaa-sama'......This one."

That's a children's show no matter how you look at it. Shidou couldn't help but bitterly smile.

But, she was right. Shidou had indeed, felt slightly calmer.

How long was she going to hug me...... Suddenly, Tohka started talking.

"......I've heard about the incident, from Reine."

"Incident......"

"The one about Kurumi, and Mana. The reason why Shidou was acting weird——I found out."

"......, Is that, so......"

Shidou swallowed and answered.

Reine shouldn't have told Tohka too much about the incident between Spirits and the AST......it must be that if she did not tell Tohka, her mental state would once again sink into turmoil.

"shidou. Do you still remember what you said when I moved into your house......?"

"Eh......?"

Shidou questioned in reply. Tohka continued to say.

"If a Spirit the same as I appeared......you would save them."

"Aahh——"

Shidou lightly nodded. That line, he can still clearly recall it.

That's right, Shidou had promised. At that time he did not lie, his determination had not wavered till now.

"But, Kurumi she——"

"——is no different, her and I."

"Eh?"

Tohka put her face on Shidou's back.

"......In my case, there was shidou. shidou, saved me. But, Kurumi she, didn't have anybody. All the while for a longer duration than I have, no one extended a helping hand towards her. "

As though she was in pain, Tohka added more strength into her arms.

"If it weren't for shidou, I would still be in the same state two months ago, always exposed under killing intent and hostility——I, would probably be the same as Kurumi right now."

"That kind of——"

Saying that, Shidou became speechless

Two months ago, Tohka, who first met Shidou, was in so much pain that one could not perceive it from her current self. Having enough of the endless battles, tired, blocked off, probably faced with the withering of her soul.

That sort of despair, if it were not easily denied by someone other than Shidou, it would probably have had no effect.

"Really——if Kurumi is a brutal Spirit that is beyond saving, I will protect shidou."

"Eh......?"

"Therefore......shidou. I beg you. Don't let such an incident continue to happen. Let Kurumi, stop killing humans. Stop her soul from being worn out......"

"............"

At those words. Shidou gulped.

Aaah, Shidou finally understood.

Shidou extremely hated Kurumi's action of killing people.

Mana would never be able to forgive Kurumi's slaughter.

In order to end this vicious cycle, to stop Kurumi, Shidou's determination was set.

However, he was still lacking a vital piece.

"......Thank you, Tohka."

"Mu......Nu? W, why? Why are you thanking me——"

"......No, I owe it to you."

That's right. It was unavoidable that he had to use a kiss to seal Kurumi's power, all Shidou could think of however, was the issue about how Mana and Kurumi had murdered people.

Because he had witnessed a scene that was overly impactful, he had totally forgotten the important goal of "saving Kurumi".

It was indeed true that Kurumi was a Spirit that had killed countless people. However, he would not allow something such as getting used to that act.

However.

When Tohka's power was sealed. Shidou had the determination to save Tohka.

Having the wish to save that girl who had hostility directed towards her for no reason at all no matter what.

When Yoshino's power was sealed. Shidou had the determination to save Yoshino.

The girl who, despite having hostility directed at her, cared for them instead, she had to be repaid.

Therefore, Shidou took action.

Indeed Shidou possesses extraordinary healing ability as well as the ability to seal the power of Spirits.

However, aside from that he was only a normal high school boy regardless of size, muscular strength and intelligence. But the reason why Shidou was able to reach out to the other party till the point of vomiting blood, was precisely due to this conviction.

To save Kurumi.

To the girl that was trapped in the endless cycle of slaughter, to save her.

And——Mana as well.

To not let that girl who calls herself Shidou's sister, continue to kill Kurumi. To stop her from wearing down her soul any longer.

It may be a delusion or just a thought.

If he didn't believe that he could do this, then it would have been impossible for Shidou to reach his hand out to them.

"—— Tohka. It's okay, I'm fine now."

"Mu......Are you, not lonely anymore?"

"Aahh."

"Really, not afraid anymore?"

"......Well, I'm still a little afraid that's all."

Shidou scratched his face while smiling bitterly.

"But, I'm alright now."

"Nn......is that so."

Saying that, Tohka, loosened her hold on Shidou.

Shidou stood up, lightly stretching. At the same time, his stomach growled. ......Now that he recalled, ever since his lunch had been vomited out at the small alley, he didn't have anything to eat after that.

"......Let's make something to eat. Tohka, do you want to eat as well?"

"Nn!"

Tohka energetically nodded.

Chapter 5: Imitation Nightmare

"Reine."

In the bridge of <Fraxinus>, Kotori called for Reine who was seated slightly closer to the commander's seat.

However, she did not give a reply. Kotori curiously peeped at Reine's side——and then tilted her head.

The monitor beside Reine was showing Mana's face for some reason, furthermore the image was zoomed in. Reine made a complicated face as she stared at the image.

"Reine? Is there something wrong with Mana?"

"……!"

At that moment, Reine seemed to finally realize Kotori's existence; Reine looked at Kotori with her eyes that had dark eyebags.

"……Kotori huh. ……Nn, there's something."

Saying that, she manipulated the controls with experienced hands. After which, the image zoomed out, and Mana's face shrank away from the screen.

"……Aside from that, how's Shin?"

"Nn——He's just a little uneasy, but he should be alright after talking with Tohka."

"......Is that so?"

Reine slightly nodded, suddenly raising her head.

"......Aaah, that's right. The analyzing job that you had asked for has already been completed."

To Reine's words, Kotori's eyebrows twitched.

A few days ago, she had passed Mana's hair and saliva samples, obtained a few days prior, to Reine to conduct a DNA test.

"Then......what's the result?"

"......Nn, Mana, is without a doubt Shidou's blood-related sister."

"——Is, is that so......"

Kotori forcefully swallowed, stroking her chest with her hand.

Although it wasn't unexpected......But, she still felt uneasy.

"Real......sister, huh. Then why would that girl be with the AST......"

"......You're wrong."

As though she was trying to interrupt Kotori, Reine sounded out.

"......I did some investigations on my own, it seems that that is not the case at all."

"What do you mean?"

"......She's not a self-defense member at all, but a transferred member from DEM Industries."

"——D•E•M Industries......?"[3D 1]

A corporation based in England that is one of the largest in the world——Aside from <Ratatoskr>'s matrix, it is the only known industry that is able to manufacture Realizer Units. Including the Self Defense Forces, the Realizer units currently equipped by the world's military and police forces, can be said to be all made by D•E•M.

This is because, due to their enthusiasm in hunting down the spirits, they are considered economical rivals with <Ratatoskr> that Kotori belongs to.

Of course, they also have magicians who are able to use the CR-Units——However, it was said that their handling experience exceeds those of special forces of different countries by a long shot.

"Hold on for a second. That makes it even more confusing. Shidou's sister, why is she a magician of D•E•M?"

"......I'm not too certain about that. However......"

Reine suddenly stopped talking, grounding her teeth and clenching her fist as though she was furious.

Kotori frowned in surprise. Even though they had worked together for a long time——This was the first time she had seen Reine like this.

"What exactly is going on?"

"......Take a look at this."

Saying that, Reine moved the controls once more, the screen showed Mana's face as well as detailed numerical values.

"......This is——"

"Aaah, her whole body had been engineered by magic. That should be the origin of her abnormal strength. However, there's a huge price to pay for that. I'm afraid, she won't be able to live any longer than 10 years."

"——What, that's——"

Originally, the Realizer units developed by D•E•M Industries are not perfect. Due to the processing level of the calculus nuclear core being unable to keep up, they had no choice but to compensate for that using the human brain.

To increase the brain wavelengths, it is a must to implant the brain with tiny devices. Origami and the rest of the AST are the same, there should be some protrusion like a horn in the midst of their hair.

However——Mana's body has already far surpassed that kind of degree.

That is......to say that her body has become similar to that of a spirit.

"......I'm not sure what kind of thought process she possessed while she underwent this kind of procedure. But......I think it's best that we don't tell Shin......for now."

Reine said with added intonation. Kotori swallowed hard, biting her lip.

The next morning, Shidou walked into the classroom and saw that Kurumi was already seating in her seat.

An obvious abnormality. Although he had already experienced it once, it was still as discomforting as expected. ——A girl that was supposed to have died, attending school with an expression as though nothing had happened.

Recognizing Shidou's face, Kurumi revealed a peaceful smile, making a bow.

"Ara, Shidou-san. Good day to you."

That appearance was nothing like yesterday.

If he were to say that just yesterday, inside an alley, this girl had both her legs and stomach pierced through as well as having been decapitated, Shidou would most certainly be suspected of being mentally unsound.

"......Go, good morning."

However, he shouldn't be surprised by this. This was a situation that he had already expected. Shidou silently gave a greeting in reply.

"I was very happy yesterday. You have to ask me out again next time"

"Is that......so. Happy, huh."

"Nn, extremely."

Kurumi once again smiled. Was she talking about her date with Shidou, or talking about that incident in the alley. Shidou was unable to discern which one.

Kurumi probably noticed what Shidou was contemplating about, she continued while maintaining her cute smile.

"But, I was a little surprised there."

"......? About what?"

Shidou asked in reply, Kurumi narrowed her eyes in response.

"I thought that Shidou-san would be applying for a leave of absence from school today."

Instantly, he was speechless. However he recovered quickly, opening his mouth to reply.

"Then I'm......really sorry about that. Would it have been better if I have not come to school?"

"No, Shidou-san came to school like a good boy, I'm really glad. "

Kurumi said with an innocent smile on her face.

Shidou patted his chest as though he was trying to control the skip in his heart, walking right up to Kurumi.

"——Kurumi."

"? What is it?"

"I——have decided to save you."

"......? Save?"

In the instant Shidou finished speaking. Kurumi's expressions suddenly lost all its warmth.

"......You really said something strange, Shidou-san."

"That's enough, this kind of stuff.——I won't, let you kill humans anymore. I won't, let Mana kill you anymore. This is my, conclusion that I have reached yesterday."

"Please don't force your values onto others alright? I hate that kind of wishful thinking."

"Is that so. That's a pity.——But I'm really sorry, I have already decided. I will save you. You, will be saved by me. No matter what , definitely."

Shidou ended his proclamation, Kurumi frowned hard.

Several moments later, she made an expression as though she was thinking about something, after which she spoke.

"——Then, whether what you say is true or false, let's put it to the test."

"Ah......?"

"Today after class, please come to the rooftop."

Kurumi left behind such a line, moving her line of sight away from Shidou.

Kurumi who was standing on the rooftop of Raizen High School, made light footsteps accompanied with a smile.

It was a fine day without any sign of clouds in the sky. The strong rays of the summer sun bore down on Kurumi's body, casting a pitch-black shadow onto the ground.

The time was roughly 9:10am. As the first lesson had already begun, the melody echoing throughout the school has faded out. In its place, a splatter of instrumental sounds came from the music room and sounds of balls bouncing about in the gymnasium. Kurumi started to step along with the rhythm as though she was dancing. As though she was tracing a circle on the ground, continually turning around and around.

"It would be great, if I could still enjoy school life with Shidou-san a bit longer——"

If one were to look at the scene from above the sky, they could probably detect that something was amiss.

The area where Kurumi had stepped on, turned dark.

Yes——it was as though the shadow made by Kurumi during her movements had never left the spot at all.

"It's almost, time."

And then, *Ka!* Her heels clacked at the floor.

Following that, the circle of darkness at the centre of the rooftop slowly started to expand its surface area.

Swallowing the entire rooftop; reaching out to the outer wall of the school building, eroding the school hall, not long after it covered an entire city area with the school as its core.

"——Kihihi, hihihihihihihihi."

Her lips twisting into a crescent, she let out a laugh.

"Aaah, aaah, Shidou-san, Shidou-san. My dear Shidou-san. Even like this, do you still intend to save me? Do you still intend to help me?"

"Nn......?"

In the first lesson, during the lecture on World History, Shidou suddenly looked at the window.

It somehow feels like the surroundings have become darker, he still thought that it was due to the clouds in the sky.

However, it can be seen from the window that the sky was clear . Not a cloud or a shadow to be seen.

"......Don't tell me."

Quickly turning towards Kurumi's direction. Since she said something disturbing ten minutes ago, she could have......

However, Kurumi did not make any strange movements, listening to class with a serious face.

"Am I worrying too much......"

Lightly sighing, he returned to his original posture.

No matter what, the moment school ends is the crux. Shidou breathed deeply as though trying to encourage himself.

Turning the rusted handle and pushing the door with her hands . The decrepit door instantly shed some paint fragments, giving out a piercing cry.

"......Tch"

Kotori frowned as she lightly clicked her tongue, arriving at the rooftop of the building.

Kotori is visiting at present one of the abandoned buildings located at the south of Tenguu city.

It's not that she had a penchant for exploring ruins. Coming to such a secluded location had its reasons.

At this time,

"——Welcome, Kotori-san."

The girl who had already been waiting on the rooftop——Mana, called out to Kotori.

That's right. When Kotori woke up this morning, on the window of Kotori's room, was a paper with a certain time and location as well as Mana's name written on it.

Kotori did not attempt to hide her displeasure, making a "Hmph" sound.

"......Really now. What's with this kind of place. If you wanted to ask me out, you should have at least prepared some delicious tea and cake."

"I apologize. ——However, I believe that it is in our best interests that we avoid crowded areas."

"......Hmph. Then, what exactly is the matter?"

"I just, wanted to talk with you that's all."

With that, Mana took out something from her pocket, throwing it in Kotori's direction.

"This is......"

Kotori frowned. What Mana had thrown over, is a highly sensitive mini earphone that <Ratatoskr> uses. ——That's right. It was the one that Shidou had lost yesterday.

"——The <Ratatoskr> organization."

"......"

In reaction to Mana's words, Kotori's eyebrows twitched.

"I've heard about the rumors. It is an organization that does not rely on military power to exterminate spirits, but one that makes use of conversation to persuade them. ——When I first heard of this I thought it was just an urban rumor."

Mana shot a sharp glare towards Kotori.

"——Don't tell me, you and Nii-sama are......"

Kotori kept the earpiece in her pocket, slightly moving the stick of the Chupa Chups.

"......That explains it, that message yesterday was your doing."

That's right, before determining that Shidou had lost his earpiece, <Ratatoskr> had once received a strange message. It was indeed Shidou's voice, after determining Kotori's name and the current situation, the connection was suddenly cut off, and nothing else was heard since then.

Kotori clicked her tongue at a volume inaudible to Mana. She was too careless. Through the answer from that time, Mana had already confirmed the existence of the organization known as < Ratatoskr>.

Mana lightly shrugged her shoulders.

"After all it's not that difficult to change your voice using the personal territory."

"......Is that so?"

Kotori scratched her hair, narrowing her eyes.

"So what is your aim? You specially called me out here, you must want something from me right?"

Mana's gaze did not move as she spoke.

"——I, do not intend to report this."

"......Hmm?"

“In return. Please let Nii-sama back out from <Ratatoskr>, immediately.”

Mana’s words made Kotori frown hard.

“What do you mean?”

“It’s nothing much. ——Kotori-san, why must you let Nii-sama do such a dangerous thing. Let’s not talk about realizer units for now, he doesn’t even have a proper weapon on him and you let him confront spirits, isn’t this too much?”

“You already said that he’s supposed to persuade the other party, and you expect him to point a gun at them while rambling away? What difference is that from a serial rapist? Don’t tell me you’re a masochist?”

As Kotori brushed off Mana’s statement, Mana’s gaze increased in intensity and her tone became sterner.

“Please don’t joke around. Are you even concerned for Nii-sama? At that time, if I wasn’t there, Nii-sama could have already been killed by <Nightmare>.”

“............”

There was no reason to divulge any more information. Kotori did not say a word.

However Mana seemed to have misunderstood Kotori’s reaction and, grinding her teeth, she continued.

“——Kotori-san.——No, Itsuka Kotori. It’s sad. You are disqualified from being Nii-sama’s sister. You are not worthy for Nii-sama to be placed in your care.”

“......”

Kotori’s face twitched, after that she raised the stick of her Chupa Chups.

“Heeh~ Then, what does being disqualified as a sister mean?”

“I will have no choice but to bring Nii-sama back.”

Mana’s words caused Kotori’s expressions to twist.

“What a joke. Do you want to leave Shidou in the care of an evil industry such as DEM?”

Kotori shrugged her shoulders, Mana relaxed her arms and her shoulders shook in surprise.

“......Why do you know about this?”

“That’s because I have an excellent friend. If you are talking about handling information, we’re about even.”

Kotori fearlessly said, Mana heaved out a sigh.

“——Well, since it’s already known then there’s no further need to hide it anymore. That’s correct. I am originally not a member of the Self-Defense Force. However, due to the allocation of DEM Industries’, there was a need to be placed in such an occupation.”

However as she said that, her gaze swiftly sharpened.

“But, DEM being an evil corporation, I can’t pretend that I didn't hear that. They took me in who had amnesia and gave me a reason to live. I am very grateful towards them.”

“......Seriously? Looks like you’re not crazy huh.”

“How rude. What exactly are you trying to imply?”

Kotori sensed amiability in Mana’s words. Don’t tell me she——

“You, don’t tell me, you don’t know......? About your body?”

“My body......? What are you talking about?”

Mana tilted her head in confusion. Kotori trembled as she gulped.

“......What’s with that...”

Although it wasn’t out of her expectations.....But what if Reine’s worries became true? Kotori frowned as she made her way towards Mana, grabbing her shoulders.

“You, what are you trying to do?”

“......Let's not talk about this for now. You’re the one that should leave that DEM, <Ratatoskr> will take responsibility for your well-being. So——”

“Haa......? What are you saying all of a sudden......”

At this, just as Mana was about to question Kotori while frowning, Kotori and Mana’s handphones sounded at almost the same time.

Revealing an impatient expression Kotori answered the call.

"——It's me. What is it?"

"Com, commander! Raizen High School has an extremely strong spirit wavelength reading!"

"What is going on......?"

Kotori took a peek at Mana. It seems——from the look on her face, she too had received a similar report.

Shidou took in a deep breath, slowly breathing out.

The air in his lungs had been completely exchanged, a feeling as though his body had rebooted could be felt.

"......Excellent."

The time was 4:30pm. Sounds of students preparing to go to club activities started to spread.

In the end, except for that one time today, there was totally no opportunity to talk to Kurumi at all. After the last homeroom ended, Kurumi did not even look towards Shidou's direction as she immediately stepped out of the classroom.

"......Are you alright, Shin?"

At this moment, from the communicator in his right ear, a voice that sounded extremely sleepy called out. It was Reine.

“Yeah, I’m unexpectedly......calm.”

“......That’s good. However, please be careful.”

“——Yes.”

The same time Shidou swallowed hard, he noticed something odd.

“Reine-san? Now that you said it, how come I don’t hear Kotori’ s voice......”

“......Aaah, Kotori had to leave to do some things outside.”

“No, if she has something to do outside, why must she choose to do it at such an important time? ”

“......Kotori understands this as well. However, after much deliberation, she judged that the chances of success would be raised. ......If a distraction happens to interrupt us mid-way it could be troublesome.”

“Haa......? Di, did something come up?”

“......Please focus on Kurumi for now. She is an opponent that you cannot overcome if you are distracted.”

“......, Ri, right.”

Although he was concerned about Reine's words, it was also true that he did not have the spare time to think about other matters. Kurumi should already be waiting at the rooftop by now. Shidou started to walk towards the staircase——

“......Wha!?”

The next moment Shidou frowned at the uncomfortable feeling he felt around him.

Shidou was not sure of the actual reason himself. However he noticed that the instant the surroundings darkened, his body was assaulted by fatigue and weakness for no reason at all.

It was as though the air had thickened in viscosity, heavily wrapping itself around his limbs.

“Thi, this, is......”

Shidou, in the situation where he was about to kneel onto the floor, managed to hang on, maintaining his posture.

The students around him let out a pained groan, collapsing on the spot. If he were to put it into words, it was truly an abnormal scene.

“Hey......, hey, are you alright!?”

Shidou hastily ran up and shook the shoulder of a female student who had collapsed. However she had probably lost consciousness as there was no reaction at all.

“Reine——san, this is......!?”

“Using the school as the reference point, we've determined that there's a strong spirit wavelength. This reaction——it's unmistakable, it's Kurumi's doing. A boundary field......Looks like it is the kind that would cause all humans who enter it to weaken.”

“Wh, why must she do such a......”

“About that, it should be faster if you ask the perpetrator herself .”

Reine said. It was as she had stated. Shidou swallowed hard, standing up. It felt as though it would be hard to move around, but it wasn't to the extent that he would collapse.

“Aare, now that I think of it, why am I......”

“......Don't forget, Shin. You have the spirit powers of Tohka and Yoshino sealed inside your body. It could be instinctual, but your body as of now can be said to have the protection of the spirits.”

“Spirit power......”

After mumbling, Shidou suddenly widened his eyes.

Opening the door that he had just walked out from, he shouted loudly.

“Tohka!”

That's right, Tohka should still be inside the classroom. Although he did mention that he needed to leave early for something, there was no response since he left.

There were around ten students still inside the classroom, everyone was either lying unconscious on the ground or on the table. ——However, amongst them.

“Ooh, shidou......”

Tohka lightly pressed her head as she responded to Shidou. Although the majority of her powers were sealed, she was still a spirit. She was more resistant to spirit power compared to humans.

“Are you alright, Tohka!”

“Nn....... But, my body feels so heavy......What is going on, this... ...”

Using a feverish voice she painfully moaned, weakly shaking her head.

“......Shin.”

Reine's voice called out from the other end of the earpiece. Even if he didn't go into detail she would have probably understood what exactly is going on.

“Tohka, stay here and rest. I'll do something about this......!”

“shi, dou......?”

“It's okay. I will——resolve this.”

Shidou lightly caressed Tohka's head, walking out to the hallway with his determination set.

Shaking off the thick air and climbing up the stairs. Shidou forced his abnormally fatigued limbs, finally arriving at the door to the rooftop.

The door, was not locked.

No——To put it more accurately, below the door handle, there was a hole similar to a bullet path. The lock had lost its function.

It was definitely Kurumi's doing. Shidou took a deep breath before opening the door.

“Gu......”

Eyebrows tightly knitting together. Even though he had reached the rooftop, the sticky air still did not improve at all. No, it almost feels as though the weakness that assaulted his body was intensified.

Looking left and right. He was surrounded by fencing, an unpleasant space.

And in the centre.

“——Welcome. I've been waiting for you, Shidou-san.”

Kurumi raised the hem of her astral dress, slightly lowering her body and bowed.

"......"

When Origami felt the abnormality, she was walking down a corridor on the east building of the school.

As though in the blink of an eye, it felt as though the entire world had changed. It was almost as if her vitality had been sucked from her body and absorbed by the air, an unexplainable sense of weakness attacked her. In reality, the surrounding students have already collapsed one after another.

"Guh——"

If this continues she would be prone to losing consciousness. After Origami came to that conclusion, she took out a device from her pocket and placed it on her palm, using her finger to make contact with the touchscreen and said.

"Voice recognition•AST• Tobiichi Origami"

Instantly, her fingerprints and voice patterns were matched. * Beep Beep*, after this electronic sound, the device started to expand.

"Basic Realizer Unit——Activation acknowledged."

Origami said, using the device to lightly make contact with the transmitter point on her head.

Instantly, Origami's surroundings became her personal territory that wrapped around her body and the weakness that tortured her whole body lessened.

However at the same time, a headache akin to that of an explosion going off in her brain assaulted Origami.

Gritting her teeth while enduring, Origami opened her mouth and said.

“Combat wiring suit——Engaged.”

After that, faint light was emitted from within the personal territory——in the next instant, the Raizen High School uniform that Origami was wearing transformed into the standard combat wiring suit of the AST.

“……, ……”

The moment the headache was almost gone——In an instant, Origami knelt on the floor on one knee.

This was an emergency device that immediately allows for the expansion of the wiring suit commonly worn in the base. Even though she had obtained permission to have this device just in case, but she still felt uncomfortable.

This miniature device contains the basis realizer unit. Meaning to say, it was theoretically possible to expand her personal territory. After that from within the personal territory, instantly changing clothes is not a difficult task.

However, although it was only for just an instant, she had expanded her personal territory without using the splicing device. At that point in time the burden on her brain had increased, it was indescribable. ......Well, someone with Mana's capability would probably be able to take care of this as though it was nothing.

“...........”

Origami readjusted her breathing, expanding her personal territory to the usual size of three metres.

Spirits and the AST are considered to be restricted topics. However this is considered to be an exception. Moreover, she has nothing to worry about if everyone around her had already lost consciousness.

She wasn't sure what happened to the school. But——it was easy to deduce, that this definitely had something to do with Tokisaki Kurumi.

“......”

Giving a mental order, she centralized her gravity. Origami stomped on the ground, dashing through the corridor at an amazing speed.

At the same time, the transmitter equipped onto her headgear transmitted Ryoko's voice. “——Origami!? If you had opened the line, it means that you have used the emergency suit? Currently in your school's vicinity, we've detected a strong spirit wavelength! What's your status!?”

“A bounded field. It'll be dangerous if this keeps up. Requesting reinforcements——”

At that moment, Origami's words were cut off.

“......”

The reason was simple. In Origami's way, stood a girl as though she was made out of shadows.

She was not wearing a high school uniform but a Gothic dress composed of crimson and black.

“Ufufu, Origami-san. Why are you in such a hurry?”

She placed her hand beside her mouth and snickered.

“Tokisaki——Kurumi......”

Origami's gaze sharpened and her hand positioned itself near her hip, gripping the handle of her light blade.

“Wh, what is going on, Origami!?”

“——Made contact with a spirit. Engaging in combat.

“......What!? That's too dangerous, hurry up and leave——”

She'll get distracted. Origami gave a mental order, disconnecting the communication.

Kurumi let out a satisfied smile, saying.

“Fufu, I do not wish to be interrupted this time. So I can't let you move on any further.”

“......?”

Origami did not understand Kurumi's words, slightly frowning.

However, that was only for an instant. There was no need to listen to the spirit's nonsensical words on the battlefield.

Origami tightly held the handle of her blade of light <No Pain>.

“shi, dou......shidou!!”

Tohka called out Shidou's name when he had just left the classroom.

However——Shidou did not have any intention of returning. Tohka dragged her heavy feet and started to move forwards.

“shidou......”

In her head, the words that Shidou had left behind refused to leave.

——It's okay.——I will, resolve this.

Extremely reliable and comforting words. Shidou only said it once and it had completely blown away the loneliness and unease existing within Tohka's heart.

However, at the same time, another cause for unease surfaced.

That is because when Shidou said that line, it was like two months ago when he extended his hand to Tohka and a month ago when he walked towards Yoshino's bounded field, the feeling was the same.

Shidou will definitely save everyone. However, if there was a need for him to sacrifice himself, Shidou would not hesitate to do so.

The one who saved Tohka——was such a man.

“Uwa......”

At that moment, Tohka had lost her balance, falling down onto the floor, bringing the tables and chairs with her.

“Gu——Nu......”

In order to stand up once more, she exerted strength into her feet.

——This won't do, this won't do at all. Now is not the time to be lazing around here.

Even if it's for just a second, she must hurry up and rush to Shidou's side.

“shidou......shidou......shidou......!!”

Suddenly, the instant she shouted, Tohka's head had a sensation as though it was being stimulated.

“Wh, what......?”

Saying that——Tohka remembered this feeling.

Last month. When Yoshino materialized her Angel and shot a beam of light at Shidou.

If this continues, Shidou will die. The instant she thought so, she vigorously shook her head——and her astral dress and Angel materialized.

“......This is......!”

Tohka looked down at her own appearance. —— That's right, although it was not perfect, but Tohka's body was the same as that previous time, materializing an astral dress from a membrane of light.

Her body had also been instantly revitalized to an unimaginable state. If that's the case——

Tohka forcefully jumped up, landing firmly on both feet.

“Alright......Let's go!”

Clenching her fist, she walked out of the classroom.

“shidou! Where did you go, shidou——”

Even if she shouted, she did not hear a reply.

If that was the case, she would have to search each room individually. Tohka ran out to the corridor.

However, in that instant.

“——!?”

Tohka held her breath, retreating hastily.

The reason was simple. At the front of the corridor, something resembling a bullet traced a black path heading straight for Tohka.

“Wha......Who!”

Tohka called out, in front of the corridor that was covered by shadows, slow footsteps sounded out.

Soon after, the owner of that sound appeared.

“......, You are——”

"Ufufu, how do you do, Tohka-san. May I ask that you accompany me for a while?"

The girl that wore a formal dress with a gun in hand——Tokisaki Kurumi raised the corners of her mouth as she spoke.

"Kurumi......You, what are you doing!? Why, are you setting up this bounded field......!?"

On the rooftop of Raizen High School, Shidou spread his two arms out wide as he questioned Kurumi.

Kurumi seemed to be enjoying Shidou's reaction as her smile widened.

"Ufufu, it's great isn't it? This is my <City of Devouring Time>. It's a bounded field that will plunder the [time] of those who step on my shadow."

"Plunder......time?"

After Shidou's surprised words, Kurumi smirked as she slowly moved closer.

Following that, she elegantly moved her hair. Revealing the left eye that was normally hidden.

"Wha......"

Looking at that, Shidou frowned.

There was an obvious peculiarity. An inorganic gold, and numbers and clock hands.

That's right——Kurumi's eye was just like that of a clock.

However, the strange thing was, the hands of that clock was moving in a counter-clockwise direction.

"That is——"

"Fufu, this is my [time]. Life——In other words you can say that this is my lifespan."

Saying that, Kurumi spun around once.

"My Angel, although it has a wonderful power......But in return, the price to use it is alarming. Every time I use its power, a large amount of my [time] is consumed. Therefore——I have to, from time to time, replenish it from the outside."

"Wha......"

Kurumi's words made Shidou shiver.

If what she said was true, then those people who had collapsed within Kurumi's bounded field are currently having their remaining life absorbed by Kurumi.

Kurumi looked at Shidou’s expression and for reasons unknown, showed a face containing traces of loneliness.

However that was quickly replaced by a cold smile. She used her fingertip to raise Shidou’s chin.

“The relationship between spirits and humans, is just this you know. Everyone, unfortunately, exists solely to become my food. There are no differences.”

She raised an eyebrow and as though challenging Shidou, she continued to speak.

“Aaah——But. Shidou-san. Only you are special. You are someone special.”

“......Me, you say?”

“Nn. Nn. You are the best. The only reason why I have come to this place is, to become one with you.”

“What......?”

Shidou frowned hard.

“To become one......What exactly do you mean?”

“It means exactly what I just said. It doesn’t mean that I am going to kill you or anything. That won’t have any meaning at all. ——I, want to eat•you•up.”

The word [eat] she used, was it literally or just a metaphor——he had no idea, but Shidou's stomach felt as though something cold was spreading.

However, he cannot start feeling scared now. Shidou clenched his fist and said.

"If, I'm the one you want, then you just target me! Why are you doing this——!"

Shidou yelled. Kurumi seemed to be pleased as she continued.

"Ufufu, it was about time that I replenished my [time]——Also. "

Kurumi suddenly used a sharp gaze to look through Shidou.

"——Before I eat you, can you please take back that declaration you made this morning?"

"This morning......?"

"Nn. ——To save me, and the other ridiculous comments that you made."

"......"

Under the frigid stare of Kurumi, Shidou involuntarily gulped.

"——Hey, Shidou-san, you're scared right, I'm saying this kind of reason and yet committing this kind of act? Pulling unnecessary people into this, I should be very repulsive to you right? Being saved and the like, I do not have that kind of qualification, do you understand now?”

Kurumi exaggeratedly waved her arms like an actress as she continued.

“Therefore, please take back that sentence. Furthermore, promise me to never say such words again. If you do so, I will remove this bounded field you know? From the very start, my target was only Shidou-san.”

“Wha......”

Shidou widened his eyes. That condition was certainly a simple one. It was simple enough to cause one to be suspicious as to whether Kurumi was intending to trick Shidou.

“......Kurumi is being serious here.”

Probably sensing the hesitation within Shidou, Reine’s words sounded out from the communicator.

“......From her mental state, there is no trace of deceit. Shin, if you were to agree to this condition, Kurumi will most likely remove the bounded field.”

The same time Reine said that, Kurumi moved her body while revealing a smile that would send shivers down the spine.

“Kihihi, hihi. Well, it would be better if I remove it earlier. It may be too late if the removal were to be a second too slow you know?”

“......”

Shidou and Kurumi exchanged eye contact.

For Shidou to take back his previous words. Just that. There was no difficulty in doing that at all.

On the contrary, if he does not do so, the countless lives within the bounded field may be placed in danger.

There was no room to choose from. Shidou, with his determination set, opened his mouth and said.

“......Release, the bounded field.”

Kurumi let out a sigh. She seemed to be relieved.

“Well then, please say it. That you will never declare to save me again.”

Shidou swallowed hard and continued to speak.

“About that......I can’t do it.”

“Haa——?”

The instant Shidou said that, Kurumi widened her mouth in an expression of utmost surprise. A hilarious expression. At the very least, Shidou had never seen Kurumi make such an expression till now.

“......Ara, ara, ara?”

However, Kurumi’s face swiftly had an air of displeasure replacing her former expression.

“Did you not hear me? If you take back those words you had said before, I will take down this bounded field you know?”

“......, Take that, down. Right now!”

“Then......”

“But, never! I will never take back those words!”

Shidou yelled as he shook his head.

That’s because, even if he did take those words back, there will be no change.

If he did that, Shidou will never be able to extend his hand towards Kurumi again.

“——I dislike those people who do not listen to others......!”

Kurumi shouted out, *Ton Ton*, lightly stepping back a few steps, distancing herself from Shidou.

And then, her right hand was forcefully thrust above her head.

Using her right hand as the centre, the air, *Piri Piri*, started to tremble.

——Instantly.

Uuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuu——

A piercing sound echoed throughout the entire town.

“——, Spacequake alarm......!?”

Shidou’s face was painted with fear as he groaned. This was a sound that he had heard to the point of irritation, it was the alarm that informs everyone about the sudden calamity that would devour the world——Spacequakes.

For an instant, Shidou had thought that another spirit had materialized in the city.

Spacequakes occur when spirits appear in this world due to the distortion of space.

However——Kurumi’s maniacal grin silently denied that possibility.

That’s right——This spacequake, was caused out of Kurumi’s own free will.

The ability to cause such a phenomenon, Shidou had never been informed of that at all.

However——the current situation had totally proven this theory true.

“Kihi, kihihi, kihihihihihihihihihihi, now then, what will you do now? If a spacequake were to occur in such a situation, what would everyone within the bounded field become?”

“......!”

As Kurumi ended her statement, Shidou was speechless.

Normally an alarm would sound when signs of a spacequake were detected, informing all residents living nearby to evacuate to underground shelters to avoid the disaster. However——currently , everyone who was caught in Kurumi’s bounded field is unconscious as well as being located at the centre of the spacequake itself. There was no way for them to seek shelter.

——However.

All of a sudden......Shidou’s mind surfaced a single question.

It seems that she did not notice Shidou's change of expression, Kurumi licked her lips as though she was showing off her victory.

"——Now then, Shidou-san? What will you do now? Are you afraid of me now? Do you hate me now? Or do you feel both ways about me? The weak are prey! The strong are the predators!"

"............"

Why. His heart was definitely pounding away, his breathing was in chaos, but Shidou's heart was unbelievably calm.

There was one question.

——Why, does Kurumi have to have Shidou take back his previous words?

However, let's leave that aside for now. No matter what was said, words are merely words. Kurumi's goal was to [eat] Shidou, if that was the case then she could have simply ignored him instead.

So why, does she have to be concerned to such a degree?

——The predator that she mentioned should be referring to Kurumi herself right. The prey then is most likely Shidou.

"......Shin."

Just at that moment, Reine's voice shook his right eardrum.

“......Kurumi’s mental state has changed. The numbers......it’s as if she was afraid of you.”

“Eh......?”

Shidou used a volume inaudible to Kurumi to sound out, his eyebrows slightly raised.

——Kurumi she, was afraid of Shidou?

Those words that lack a shred of reality caused Shidou to sink into confusion for a split second——And then, he immediately understood.

“Aaah——Is that, so?”

Shidou slightly let out a sigh, looking at Kurumi once more.

As someone that causes humans to shiver in fear, a spirit.

However——

“Now then! Shidou-san, what will you do now? If you don’t take back those words, there will be a lot of casualties you know!?”

Kurumi moved her line of sight from Shidou, forcefully holding her right hand that was in the air.

Instantly, *Ji~~*——A piercing screech resounded throughout the area.

It was as though the air itself was crying.

“Gu——”

There is something that he had to tell Kurumi, an issue that he must let her know of. However compared to that, he has to stop this spacequake first.

Of course——under the condition that he must not take back his previous words.

Shidou frantically pondered. Suddenly remembering what Kurumi had said before.

“......Kurumi.”

“What? Fufu, you finally wish to take back what you have said?”

Kurumi revealed a smile as she spoke. Shidou continued to speak while ignoring her words.

“You said, that your goal is to eat me......right?”

“Nn. That’s right. It would be pointless if I were to kill you. You will be able to live on within me. Ufufu, not bad right.”

“............”

With that, Shidou was convinced. He softly spoke to Reine.

“......Reine-san. If I were to————, will I survive?”

“......? Aaah, if we’re talking about your revival ability, as long as nothing goes awry, you should survive.......But what are you trying to do?”

“Just this.”

Shidou started running, he ran to the edge of the roof and started to climb the tall iron fence.

And then he stood on the ledge, looking towards Kurumi.

Kurumi showed a face of utter confusion at Shidou’s actions.

“......What are you trying to do?”

“Stop the spacequake. If not——”

Shidou pointed to the school courtyard.

“I will, jump from here and die......!”

“Ha......Haa......!?”

It seems that it was out of her expectations, Kurumi let out a shout.

“Wh, what did you say you were going to do......? Are you crazy ?”

"I'm really sorry but I'm being serious here. It seems that I definitely cannot retract what I said in the morning. ——Also, I must save you."

Kurumi seemed displeased as she tilted her head. Shidou did not mind at all as he continued.

"However, I cannot let you trigger a spacequake. So——"

"So you are taking yourself hostage? What a simple way of thinking. Are you a criminal that is being chased!?"

At Kurumi's words, Shidou lightly smiled. Thinking of the movies and the overseas news where the criminals point the guns at their temples. This was the last of the last, a final crazy act committed by people who had nowhere else to go.

However, since Kurumi's aim was Shidou, then it would not be a meaningless act.

That's right. Kurumi transferred into this school just to get Shidou. Shidou's life had its value as a hostage. This possibility was extremely high.

However Kurumi frowned, "Haa.....", and lightly sighed.

"......You think that this level of threat would work on me? Do it if you can!"

"......Aaah."

Shidou silently muttered that, his body flying out of the fencing.

It was obviously a dizzying height but yet there was no sense of fear at all. It could be because the brain was in an excited state from the endorphins released, causing the fear to be staved off.

“——!”

“......Shin!?”

The sounds of Reine and Kurumi holding her voice sounded out.

A momentarily floating sensation. Shidou’s body was falling towards the ground at an alarming speed.

“——, ...”

His consciousness was about to fly away. It feels the same as though riding on a roller coaster that was plummeting at a rapid speed. He couldn’t breathe, his limbs were numb, he felt as though he couldn't control his bladder anymore.

However, midway through his fall. Shidou’s body was supported by someone, suddenly jolting.

“......Ueh!?”

Under the sudden impact Shidou let out a stupid sound. ——Kurumi’s upper body appeared from the shadows on the side of the school building, carrying Shidou in what seems to be a princess carry.

"Oh......oh, Kuru——"

The instant Shidou wanted to shout out Kurumi's name. Kurumi's whole body emerged from the shadows, and carrying Shidou, she made her way vertically up the school building. Returning to the rooftop, she roughly let Shidou down.

"Ah—......"

Shidou let out a large sigh.

"I thought I was a goner......"

"Ah......Of course you would......!"

Kurumi replied with a loud outburst.

"I don't believe it! What the hell were you thinking!? What exactly were you thinking!? If I wasn't there you would have really died you know!?"

"Ah—......About that, how do you put it......Thank you."

"What do you think your life is!"

"No, even if you say that......"

When Shidou said that, Kurumi's expressions changed and she furiously scratched her head.

"Aaaaaaaaaaaaah, really! Are you an id——iot......!"

Shidou stood up, asking Kurumi.

“Kurumi. You, why did you save me?”

“......, That’s——If you were to die, won’t I be unable to achieve my goal?”

“Really. Well then, I guess I do have value as a hostage after all? ”

“......”

Shidou extended his finger and pointed at Kurumi.

“Now then, please stop the spacequake now! And remove this bounded field as well! If not then I will commit suicide by biting off my tongue!”

“Th, that kind of threat——”

“Do you think that I’m bluffing?”

“Guh......”

Kurumi instantly showed a regretful expression, snapping her fingers.

Following that, the piercing sound that echoed throughout the area stopped. Along with that, the heavy atmosphere that covered the vicinity had also disappeared.

“Well——Well, it’s alright. After all, my original intention was only to have Shidou-san. There’s no problem. No problem at all.”

Kurumi loudly declared as though she was trying to say those words to herself as she widened both arms towards Shidou.

However, Shidou could not just wait there to be eaten.

“Then——will you hear me out one more time?”

“Wh, what else do you want......!?”

Kurumi said as though she was troubled. Shidou, “Aaah” , nodded his head as he continued to speak.

“Just a sentence is fine. ——Kurumi, just once, won’t you give me a chance to save you?”

Kurumi widened her eyes in surprise while lifting up her eyebrows.

“......Are you still going to say that? Stop that already. It’s troubling. I, whether it’s killing people, or being killed, love them both! There’s no reason for me to hear your babbling!”

Kurumi shouted as though trying to reject Shidou. That voice, was not like the previous one that had a bottomless sense of fear——On the contrary, it was like she was scared of something.

Reine’s previous words once again resounded in his head.

That’s right......Kurumi she, must be afraid. That’s because till now not even a single person extended a helping hand to her, that’s why she must be in fear of this unknown gesture.

“Kurumi, you......have you ever experienced......a life where you don’t have to kill or be targeted?”

Shidou silently said that, Kurumi’s shoulders gave a tiny jolt.

“......That is......”

“Then, you have no idea. Then how can you be so sure that you prefer a life where you have to kill and be killed? Maybe—you would like this kind of peaceful life.”

“But, that kind of thing——”

“It’s possible! If it's me!”

Shidou loudly shouted, Kurumi seemed to be intimidated by his presence as she held her breath.

“It’s true that I cannot tolerate what you have done. It won’t be enough to atone even if you used your entire lifetime! However......! You must have mistaken something, Kurumi! I have a reason that I must save you.....!”

“——”

Kurumi took a few steps backwards. Shidou on the other hand took a step forward.

"I, I......I——"

Kurumi looked around in a panic, calling out.

"Shidou-san, I......can I really......——"

At this moment——the instant Kurumi wanted to say something.

"——You can't. How can you be fooled by those words?"

From nowhere, such a voice sounded out.

Shidou frowned in surprise. That voice was——

"Hyi......!?"

At that point, as though trying to disrupt Shidou's thinking, Kurumi who was standing in front of him, suddenly made a strange sound with her throat.

"Kurumi......?"

Shidou looked towards her——and was stunned.

"Eii, Aa, aah......"

Kurumi widened her eyes as though they were about to pop out from their sockets, letting out painful groans.

Looking down. At Kurumi’s chest, a single crimson hand extended out.

“Eh......”

Seeing this, Shidou finally realized the situation.

Not knowing when, someone had appeared behind Kurumi——and stabbed through Kurumi from the back.

“I, ah.”

“Alright, I know. That’s why——”

The hand was withdrawn from Kurumi’s chest. Instantly, Kurumi’s astral dress dissolved into the air and her white skin bared itself.

“——Really now, hurry up and rest.”

“......Hyigu.”

Leaving behind a weak death cry, Kurumi fell down like a mannequin.

And then, her body twitched for a moment——after that, she no longer moved.

“Wh......”

Shidou did not move a muscle. The sudden situation had rendered thinking impossible.

That's because, the one standing behind Kurumi.

"Ara ara, what's the matter, Shidou-san? You don't look too good."

——was Tokisaki Kurumi herself.

"Kuru, mi......? Haa? Why......"

Shidou looked at Kurumi who was engaged in a conversation with him till just now and Kurumi who had appeared before him.

That, was undoubtedly Kurumi.

Hair as black as the shadows, jade-white skin——the glowing clock for a left eye, it was the same as the Kurumi before her.

Only that her expression, there was no trace of confusion like the previous Kurumi who had collapsed onto the ground. There was only a coquettish smile.

"Really now, this kid is really troubling."

Kurumi lightly waved her hand that was stained in fresh blood.

Following that, countless hands appeared from the shadows, pulling Kurumi into the darkness.

"That was humiliating. ——However, The•me•of•this•time , could possibly be too naive."

“Wha——”

“Aaah, but then. Just now, Shidou-san’s words were really great .”

Kurumi twisted her body while smiling as though she was playing a prank,

Shidou speechlessly stood there in a daze.

——He totally could not understand.

Just now, in Shidou’s eyes, two Kurumis existed.

Kurumi•had•killed•Kurumi. The•first•Kurumi, was• consumed•by•the•shadows.

“Ha,a......”

Shidou let out a sound in a daze, Kurumi seemed to be amused as she started to laugh.

“Now, then. Let’s hurry up and start shall we?”

As Kurumi said that, two hands grew from below Shidou’s legs, tightly grabbing onto him.

“Uwah......!?”

“Your power......I’ll be helping myself, Shidou-san.”

Saying that, Kurumi walked closer to Shidou, stretching out her right hand.

After that, in that instant she was using that cool hand to gently touch Shidou’s face.

“Gi……”

Kurumi let out such a sound.

Glimpsing for an instant a white shadow had descended from the sky, the right hand that Kurumi had used to touch Shidou had been sliced off, spinning a few times in the air before falling to the ground.

“——Ara...Ara”

Kurumi frowned as she bore the pain, somersaulting backwards as she retreated.

After a moment, Shidou finally realized that there was one more person other than Kurumi and himself.

“Mana!”

“Yes.——You’ve got yourself into another troublesome situation I see.”

Wearing the wiring suit, Mana whose both hands had massive blades of light equipped, glanced at Shidou’s direction and said so.

However Mana quickly readied her light blades, shooting a sharp glance towards Kurumi.

“You still haven’t learned have you, <Nightmare>.”

“”——Ku, hihi, hihi. Just like before, you’re really something. Elohim To be able to cut through my <Divine Astral Dress• Third>. [3D 2]

“Hmph. I’m sorry to say. That kind of Astral Dress is meaningless in front of me. So you better——”

At this moment, just as Mana wanted to continue, Kurumi exaggeratedly spread out both arms, turning on the spot.

“However it is......Only I, who you cannot kill.”

As Kurumi said that, *Ka Ka Ka*, she stepped onto the ground with both feet as though following a rhthym.

Zafkiel “Now, now, come out—— <Emperor of Time>”[3D 3]

Instantly, behind Kurumi, a massive clock slowly materialized.

It was multiple times taller than Kurumi, a huge clock face. And the hands in the middle were represented with an ancient handgun and rifle of intricate designs.

“......,This is——an Angel!?”

Shidou couldn’t help but voice out.

——Angel. [Miracles taken form]. A weapon with absolute power that spirits can be proud of.

“Ufufu......”

Kurumi laughed, removing the gun from the massive clock face that represented the hour hand.

And then,

Zafkiel Dalet
“<Emperor of Time>—— [The Fourth Bullet].”[3D 4]

As Kurumi muttered, the Roman numeral [IV] engraved on the clock slowly oozed out something resembling a shadow——in an instant, it was absorbed into the muzzle of the handgun in Kurumi’s hand.

Shidou narrowed his eyes at this sight.

He had noticed, that the instant the shadow flowed out from the clock, the clock hands in Kurumi’s left eye was moving clockwise at an alarming speed.

However this question was quickly driven out of his head.

“Wh......”

Mana’s surprised voice entered Shidou’s ears. It was impossible to determine Mana’s expressions from this position, but it should be similar to the expression that Shidou is having right now.

Kurumi placed the muzzle of the handgun in her left hand under her chin.

“What do you plan to——”

Mana was in the middle of her words, Kurumi gave a faint smile, pressing the trigger without hesitation.

Don! Such a sound echoed in the surroundings, Kurumi’s head gave a jolt. No matter how you looked at it, this scene can’t be anything else but suicide.

However. In that instant Shidou and Mana immediately corrected their way of thinking.

“Haa......?”

It feels as though he had made a stupid expression on his face.

However if one were to witness this scene, anyone would probably do the same thing.

That’s because, in that instant when Kurumi shot herself, Kurumi’s right hand which had fallen to the ground, floated in the air as though it was a rewinding of a movie reel——flying towards Kurumi.

And then once the right hand made contact with Kurumi’s right arm, it beautifully joined, recovering as though nothing had happened. Even the long glove on her arm was perfectly restored.

“Ufufu, what a good kid, Zafkiel <Emperor of Time>.”

“......It’s the first time I’ve seen this trick, that. No wonder, it’s a wonderful healing ability you have there.”

Mana unhappily stated, Kurumi snickered as she shook her head.

“Kihihi, hihi, that’s incorrect. I’ve merely•rewound•my•time.”

“......What?”

Mana raised an eyebrow.

However Kurumi only fearlessly smiled, not replying, raising her right hand high.

Using that hand to retrieve the minute hand on the clock face of Zafkiel <Emperor of Time> behind her——the rifle.

“Aaah, aaah. Mana-san, Mana-san. Just for today, please let me defeat you.”

Saying that, in front of the clock face that is void of hands, she readied both guns.

——As though, she was displaying time itself.

“Now, then. Let’s start. I’ll let you see my Angel’s power.”

“——Hmph, very well. I’ll kill you off like I always do.”

At Mana’s words, Kurumi started laughing as though Mana had said something ridiculous.

“Kihi, hihi, hihihihihihihihi, you still~~don’t understand? You are definitely unable to kill me.”

“It’s alright. If I can’t beat you I will keep beating you down, if I can’t kill you I will kill you until you die, to keep hunting you down, that is my mission and my purpose for existing.”

“Hihihihihi, aaah, that’s right. You should be like this. Fufufu, fufu, ufu, ufu, excellent, I can’t take it anymore. ——Well then, what would it be? Decapitation? A stab through my chest? Or dismemberment?”

“Hmph, I only know of one monster that is able to survive through all that. ——Let’s try pulverising you to powder, till not a single fragment remains.”

“! Heeh? Now that would be a new experience. Very good. Excellent.”

“You’re still as crazy as always.”

“Hihihi, if that’s the case, then I guess we’re about even? You’re not even batting an eyebrow now. I still remember the first time you killed me, you were still so cute back then.”

“Keep your mouth shut. Or rather, would you want your mouth and throat to fly as well?”

“Ufufu, fufu. Are you able to do so?”

Saying that, Kurumi raised the handgun in her left hand.

“<Emperor of Time (Zafkiel)> —— [The First (Aleph) Bullet].”[3D 5]

Just like before, the shadow that the Roman numeral [I] on the clock face oozed out and was absorbed into the handgun in Kurumi’s hand. After which she once again proceeded to hold the muzzle to her chin——and pressed the trigger.

Instantly.

“Gu……!?”

Kurumi’s figure suddenly disappeared. And at the same time, Mana was sent flying.

“Ahahahahahahahahahahahahahaha! Can’t•you•see•me•?”

“Tch——”

Mana changed directions in mid-air, advancing towards Kurumi as though she had stepped on air.

However, Kurumi’s body had disappeared once more like fog, appearing behind Mana in the next instant, delivering a heel kick to her back.

“Kuh……!”

However at the same time Mana showed a sharp glare, Kurumi's movements suddenly became sluggish. It seems like she had used her personal territory to capture Kurumi.

Mana seemed as though she wanted to split Kurumi's midsection into two as she swung her blades of light horizontally. However Kurumi evaded with millimeters to spare, somersaulting onto the watertank.

“Fufu, you're amazing! You're still able to counterattack even though I •accelerated•time!”

“Hmph......Even though it's an interesting ability, but it can be said to have the worst compatibility against me who has the personal territory you know? If I am able to sense you, I will definitely be able to capture your movements.”

“Aaah, aaah, that's so. Then——”

Kurumi turned towards Mana at a speed that was impossible to discern with the human eye once more.

Zafkiel Zayin
“<Emperor of Time>——[The Seventh Bullet]!!”[3D 6]

Almost simultaneously, the shadow that emerged from the [VII] Roman numeral of the clock face was sucked into Kurumi's rifle. After which she aimed the muzzle towards Mana and fired.

“It's useless——Didn't I tell you......!”

A bullet of that caliber is useless against Mana who is equipped with her personal territory. However——

“Eh......?”

Shidou let out a dazed sound.

——Mana’s body, which was currently in the middle of flight, had totally stopped.

“Mana......!”

Despite Shidou’s cries, Mana did not move. There was no response at all. It was as though Mana’s time had been stopped for just that moment.

“Haa, haa.”

Kurumi laughed, firing countless bullets towards Mana’s body.

The guns in Kurumi’s hands were both ancient single-action guns. However, each time a shot was fired, shadows would emerge from Kurumi’s feet, entering the muzzle of the guns in the place of bullets.

After countless seconds, Kurumi landed onto the ground. At the same time,

“Ga——ah......!?”

Mana, who had countless bullets fired at her, fell to the ground bloodied.

“Kihihihihihihihihi, ara ara, what’s the matter?”

“Wha——Just now, that was......”

“Mana!”

Shidou cried out, running to Mana’s side and kneeling on one knee.

“Nii-sama, it’s dangerous. Hurry up and leave......”

“Idiot, what are you saying!”

At this moment, the sound of a door opening could be heard from behind Shidou.

“shidou!”

“——Shidou.”

New people called out Shidou’s name, appearing on the rooftop .

“Tohka——Origami......!?”

Turning around, he called out their names.

Although he wanted to know why the two of them were still able to move about in the bounded field, that thought soon disappeared after looking at their appearances. Tohka was wearing her Astral Dress while Origami on the other hand was wearing her wiring suit.

“Are you alright, shidou!”

“Are you hurt?”

The two of them asked at the same time, after which they glared at each other in displeasure before turning back to look at Shidou.

However, very swiftly, the two soon noticed Kurumi at the front as well as Mana who was kneeling on the ground while drenched in blood. The two of them moved in front of Shidou, each readying their swords against Kurumi.

“Master Sergeant Tobiichi......Tohka-san. The two of you are alright. However......Tohka-san. What is with your appearance......”

Mana gasped in pain while Tohka let out a surprised sound.

“Shidou’s sister number 2. I could say the same to you, why are you dressed like that? It looks just like the AST——”

Mana and Tohka exchanged looks of surprise, however Kurumi’s laughter soon broke off their conversation.

“Ara, ara, ara. Is everyone here now?”

As Kurumi said that, Tohka and Origami both spoke at the same time.

"Kurumi......you suddenly ran off, so you were in this kind of place!"

"Your movements are hard to understand. What exactly are you planning?"

"Eh......?"

Shidou frowned. Just what are the two of them talking about.

"She, escaped......?"

Shidou asked, Tohka moved her sight away from Kurumi and at the same time she nodded her head "Nn.".

"Kurumi was blocking my way......However after that explosion , she disappeared."

However Origami contradicted Tohka's statement.

"That's strange. Tokisaki Kurumi was in a battle with me."

"What?"

Tohka instantly showed a face of utter shock——but she quickly shook her head, looking at Kurumi once more.

"......It's sad, Kurumi. Since you had decided to harm Shidou, I can't forgive you for that."

"I concur."

Origami too looked at Kurumi once again.

Kurumi seemed pleased as she spun around once.

"Ufufu, huhu, aaah, how scary. I'm so scared. You people want to use your advantage in numbers, against someone as weak as myself."

Her face however did not show a hint of fear as she smirked.

"However, I'm going at it for real today. ――Well, isn't that so? [We]."

"Haa――"

Because of that strange phrase Shidou frowned. ――However, in the next instant.

"What......?"

Shidou, Tohka, Origami, and Mana, the four's voices overlapped with each other.

However that was to be expected.

Kurumi's shadows that have spread itself on the rooftop.

In the middle of that, countless white arms appeared at the same time.

And, that’s not all. Till now, those pale white arms that have only been showing their elbows, slowly but surely, revealed their whole appearances above the ground.

“What......th, this kind of......!!”

His voice was involuntarily squeezed out from his throat.

However that was to be expected. That’s because, those white hands——

All, belong to [Kurumi].

Till the point where she was about to crowd out the vast rooftop , with numbers too large to count.

The Kurumis who were wearing their Astral Dress climbed out from the shadows.

“Fufu.” “Ara, ara.” “Ufufu.”

“Ara ara ara.” “Did I scare you?”

“Shidou-san.” “Now then, what to do?” “Ahahahaha!”

“Kihihihi”. “Looks delicious.”

“Now, then.” “Shall we play?”

“Come now?” “Fufu.” “Kihihi.”

“Fufufufufufu” “What’s the matter?”

Countless Kurumis smiled as they spoke.

“This, is......”

Mana sounded out. Kurumi who was holding the guns spread her arms out as she tilted her chin high.

“Ufufu, fufu. How is it? Spectacular isn’t it? This is my past. My experiences. They are the me from different time periods you know?”

“Wha——”

“Ufufu——In the end [We] are nothing but clones of myself, mere copies. They don’t have the same strength as myself, rest easy.”

Now then, Kurumi continued to speak.

“Mana-san, do you understand now? This is the reason why you definitely cannot kill me.”

——Mana held her breath. And at the same time, Tohka, Origami——as well as Shidou, did the same thing.

“It’s over, attack.”

“......, Don’t joke with me......!!”

The one who cried out was Mana. Using her personal territory to move her injured body up into the air, the equipment changed to release multiple lasers.

The laser beams pierced through some of the Kurumi’s bodies around her, falling towards the ground.

However, the surrounding Kurumis that avoided the attack flew into the air, starting their assault on Mana.

“Hmph......!”

Mana’s equipments started to change, cutting apart the head, arms, and torso of the Kurumis that closed in on her. On the rooftop, Kurumi’s [parts] were strewn all over.

However the Kurumi who held two guns in front of Zafkiel <Emperor of Time> had already finished the loading of Zayin [The Seventh Bullet], firing it at Mana——Just like before, Mana’s body instantly froze in mid-air.

“Mana——”

Shidou yelled at the top of his lungs. However, he was helpless.

Tohka and Origami both seemed as though they were protecting Shidou, waving their swords——However the difference in numbers were simply too large. They were flanked from left and right the moment the rear was put down and they were immediately subdued on the spot.

With that, Shidou had no more cards left to play. Both arms were caught by Kurumi and he was forced onto the ground.

All of this happened within five minutes.

However, this was to be expected. Tohka was in a state where she could not bring out her full strength——Origami too did not bring out her full arsenal.

Mana, who is the only one that has the ability to compete with an actual spirit, in that instant where she was immobilized by the Angel, the victor was already decided.

"Tohka——Origami......Mana......!!"

With both arms held down onto the ground, Shidou barely managed to make a sound.

"Guh......"

"————"

Nearby, Tohka and Origami as well as Shidou were being held down, both of them were hurt everywhere, letting out pained breaths.

From Shidou's position, he was unable to ascertain Mana's status. He only knew that she fell from the sky, but was blocked by the numerous Kurumis.

"Ufufu, fufu."

In the midst of that, Kurumi who was holding the guns and calmly smiling started to walk closer towards Shidou.

"Aaah, aaah, I've waited too long. Finally, I can start tasting Shidou-san."

"St......, stop it Kurumi! Don't get near shidou!"

"......, Let go——"

Despite the struggles of Tohka and Origami, they were unable to escape their bonds.

Kurumi snickered as she walked in front of Shidou, stopping her footsteps.

At this point, Kurumi's eyebrow twitched as though she had just remembered something.

"Fufu——That's right."

Saying that, she put the gun in her right hand to her left hand; following that she raised it up high.

Soon after, just like before, another spacequake alarm started to sound out.

“Wha......, Kurumi, what are you planning to——”

“Ufufu, fufu. The same thing as before of course. Everyone hasn’t woken up yet——Ufufu, they’ll definitely die for sure.”

“St, stop it......! If you are going to do such a thing, I will bite off my tongue——”

The instant he said that, the Kurumis that were holding Shidou down, inserted their slender fingers into Shidou’s mouth from both sides, pressing down on his lower jaw and tongue.

“Hugu......!?”

“Biting off your tongue......? Let’s see how you do that now?”

Kurumi smiled as she tightly held her right hand. Following that was the same as last time, a piercing sound started to resound from the surroundings.

“Fufu, hihihi, hihihihihihihi! Now! In order for you to not deceive me anymore, I’ll send you into utter despair!”

“Stop it——!”

Although he was unable to properly pronounce his words, he was still able to barely make a sound.

Kurumi ignored Shidou's pleas, swinging down her right hand.

Kurumi she——smiled. She chuckled, lightly laughing.

"Ah——hahahahahahahahahahahahahahahahahahahahahahahahahahaha————!"

In an instant, Raizen High School's surrounding air started to make a terrifying sound——the air started to tremble as though it was an earthquake.

However.

“Ah——Haa......?”

After several seconds, that laughter had ended with a question mark.

Kurumi looked around in surprise.

However that was it. The sky had indeed been split. The piercing sound was still ringing. The air was as though an explosion had gone off as it continued to vibrate.

However——that was all there is.

“.............?”

Shidou had also noticed the irregularity and frowned.

He had seen the site of spacequakes countless times. It was as though space itself had been eaten out, whatever that was there would disappear without a trace.

However the surroundings of Raizen High School and the city were still intact.

“This is......What is going on......?”

Kurumi tilted her head in confusion, following that,

"——Don't you know? Spacequakes, as long as you trigger a spacequake at the same time with the same magnitude, you'll be able to cancel it."

It seems as though it was explaining what was going on. From above their heads, a cool voice sounded out.

"——Who are you?"

Kurumi's face twitched, her right hand taking hold of her gun once more as she looked upwards.

Shidou too raised his head——and then widened his eyes.

The sky was, red.

That was his first impression.

On top of the roof. Above Shidou and Kurumi's heads, a mass of flames was floating.

And, in the midst of those flames, the figure of a young girl stood.

It seemed like a girl who was cosplaying. Her sleeves floated in the wind, half of her body seemed to be merged with the flames as they flickered. Her waist had a belt of flames, as though it was the celestial dress from the heavenly maidens.

And on her head grew two inorganic horns. That appearance did not look like a princess——but that of, an oni.

However, the reason why Shidou's vision was taken up by that girl was not just that.

Dazedly, he opened his mouth.

"Koto, ri......?"

That's right, Shidou's sister, <Ratatoskr>'s commander.

The appearance of the girl who was clad in flames——looked like Itsuka Kotori no matter how you looked at it.

Kotori slowly descended, looking towards Shidou's direction.

"——Just for a while, I'll be taking it back, Shidou."

"Eh......?"

Not understanding Kotori's words, Shidou frowned.

"......, That, is——"

At this point, not knowing why, Origami's face showed an expression of fear that Shidou had never seen before.

Camael

"——Burn, <Blazing Annihilating Demon>!"[3D 7]

Following that, Kotori's mouth said that name.

With that, flames started appearing around her body, forming something similar to a massive club.

After that, the instant Kotori grabbed that club, a vermillion blade was revealed on its side.

That looked just like——an absurdly massive, battleaxe.

Shidou was speechless. Kotori lightly waved that huge battleaxe, looking at Kurumi.

“Now then——Let our $\overset{\text{Date}}{\text{battle}}$ begin.”

Afterword

Long time no see, I am Tachibana Koushi. For those friends who started reading from Volume 2, hello for the first time, I am Tachibana·Fitzgerald·Koushi.

Here is [DATE A LIVE 3 KURUMI KILLER]. It has a different composition from the previous volume, therefore I wonder how you felt about it. It would satisfy me if you were happy with it.

And speaking of which, Kurumi's name is read as [Kurumi] and not [Kyouzou]. That is obviously the name of an oji-san.

I have a piece of news to report here. My work [DATE A LIVE] is currently in the midst of an anime production! That's too fast already. It's only the third volume.

For more details please wait for the news in the future. I got a shock myself two days before writing this chapter.

Muu—......however, an anime huh. Even though I was a total newbie three years ago, it sure feels amazing. But then again it has been 10 volumes since [Soukyuu no Karma]. It somehow feels great.

And the greatest credit has got to go to the wonderful Tsunako-sensei for the excellent illustrations, the editors who gave it their all for each volume and everyone in the publishing company as well as all of you who are holding this book in your hands.

Although I feel that I should be satisfied with this, I believe I should strive for even greater heights. I'll be in everyone's care from here on out once more.

Well then, I'm sure that those who read this volume would understand, this volume is much more closely linked to the story in next volume compared to those of before.

And in the next time, my decision to use that character as the cover page. It would probably make people who haven't read this volume feel perplexed.

Well then, I hope to see you next time.

Tachibana Koushi

Translation Notes and References

Chapter 1:

1. ↑ Aiaigasa, or ア literally means "Love-Love Umbrella." Like American sweethearts carve their love on the trunk of a tree, Japanese sweethearts draw this as an expression of their love.

Chapter 2:

1. ↑ "遠", there's also a Chinese idiom saying the same thing, it means that relatives who are related to you are not as useful as people around you.
2. ↑ "三", it is said that when a child reaches three years old, his attitude would determine how he would be like in the future.
3. ↑ Adapted from the Spanish donkey, it is now commonly used as an SM equipment. A medieval torture tool, the punished is lowered onto the pointed edge of the tool, the edge digging into the crotch area.

Chapter 3:

1. ↑ The name of the loyal dog is known as ハ (Hachi), in this case the citizens calls the dog statue (Pachi)
2. ↑ Acqua Pazza, or crazy water in Italian, refers to poached white fish, or the lightly herbed broth used to poach the fish.

Chapter 4:

1. ↑ Acronym for Deus Ex Machina, means ‘God from the machine’ in Latin. It is a plot device whereby a seemingly

unsolvable problem is suddenly and abruptly solved with the contrived and unexpected intervention of some new event, character, ability, or object.

2. ↑ The name of Kurumi's Astral Dress, it means 'God' or ' Gods' in Hebrew.
3. ↑ The name of Kurumi's Angel, one of the seven archangels.
4. ↑ The fourth letter of the Hebrew Alphabet.
5. ↑ The first letter of the Hebrew Alphabet.
6. ↑ The seventh letter of the Hebrew Alphabet.
7. ↑ One of the seven archangels, his name means 'One who sees God.'

Chapter 5: